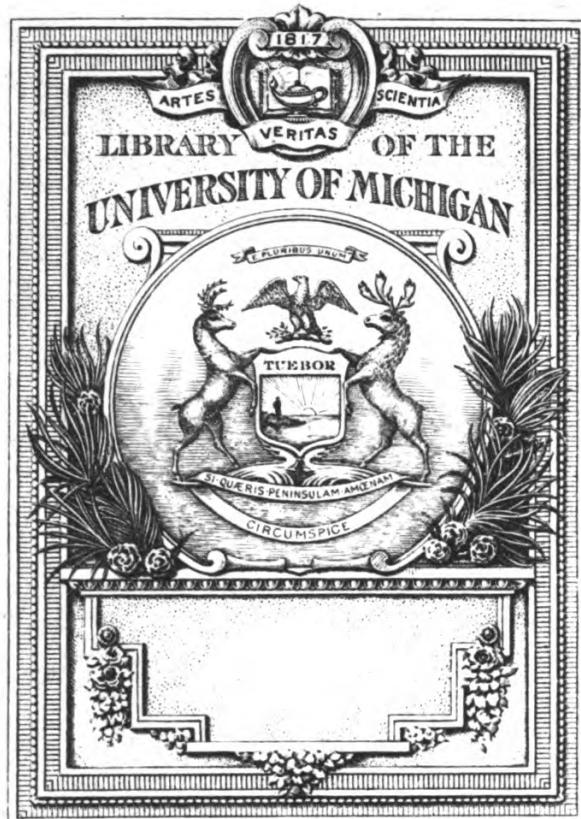


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But Soldiers Wondered Why

BOOKS BY
Frank Gervasi

BUT SOLDIERS WONDERED WHY
WAR HAS SEVEN FACES

FRANK GERVASI

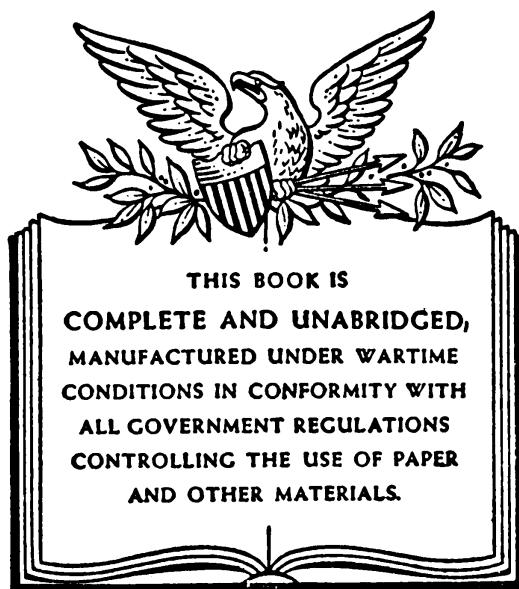
But Soldiers Wondered Why

Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die . . .

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
Charge of the Light Brigade



Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc.
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 1943



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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES

AT

THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

To
Alice and Newell Rogers

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Introduction

AMERICANS are dying in the Mediterranean and in the Pacific, in the *two* theaters of the *two* wars in which we find ourselves. Why? The cynical say that our men fight because they have been ordered to fight and soldiers obey orders. Even if that was why men *fight* it isn't why they *die*.

War is something far more complex than an order and the execution thereof. Men take up arms when impelled to do so by economic, political, and moral forces. They may not fully *understand* these forces but they *feel* them.

Von Clausewitz said that war is born and receives its form from the ideas, the sentiments, and the relationships which exist at the moment of its outbreak. Wars result from the accumulation of ambitions, prejudices, antagonisms, competitions, and wrongs perpetrated during the so-called peace years. We were at war with Japan long before the Japanese attacked us at Pearl Harbor. We were morally outraged by Japan's aggressions against China for more than a decade before December 7, 1941.

Similarly we can be said to have been at war with Italy much before our Congress formalized our indignation with a declaration of war. We were outraged by Fascism's imperial war in Africa and by its support of what most of us considered an iniquitous cause in the Spanish Civil War.

We went to war against Germany almost the moment Adolf Hitler emerged as Der Fuehrer of a new and ambitious Ger-

many. We were morally revolted by his racialism and his political vindictiveness. The shape of the war that was to come was determined by the events of the years from Japan's invasion of Manchukuo through Germany's pistol-point *Annexation* with Austria, Italy's rape of Ethiopia, Nazi-Fascist intervention in the Spanish Civil War, to the betrayal at Munich.

Throughout those years we were only vaguely conscious of the political issues involved. If we were conscious of these issues at all, we were much confused. Our logic often intruded to say that Japan and Germany and Italy were doing only what had been done before by the British, by ourselves, by the French and Spaniards during our respective periods of growth.

Of the economic impulses to conflict we were perhaps even less aware than we were of the political forces. We would never fight Japan merely because China's silk was being absorbed by Japan. We would, we said, buy it from Japan instead. We didn't worry about being deprived of Spain's cork by an anti-Democratic dictator. Once he had the country conquered, we reasoned, if we reasoned at all, we'd buy it from him instead of from the Republicans. Italy's conquest of Ethiopia had no direct economic repercussions in our lives.

Neither did Germany's pre-1939 depredations in Europe seriously affect the economy of the United States. Not until Japan had acquired most of the rich regions of Asia and the Pacific did we feel the *material* forces at work and even then not until *after* we had gone to war and were obliged to ration rubber, gasoline, wool, and a thousand other commodities we imported before. Moral and spiritual forces are the paramount determinants of war. This was true in Von Clausewitz' day and no less true today.

But if these moral and spiritual determinants fashion the pattern and purpose of war, so do they shape the certainty or

uncertainty of victory. Those impulses which inevitably urged us into war are identical with the forces which will bring us victory.

I have long held the conviction that we would win the war. I expressed it in a recent book. That book sought to examine the reasons why we would win the war and it attempted, at a time when people seemed not to have such a concept, to convey a sense of the globality of the war. Readers in the spring of 1942 were neither prepared to accept the thesis that victory over the Axis was inevitable nor that this war is a World War and at the same time a World Revolution.

The form of the War-Within-A-War appeared to me then to be roughly as follows. People everywhere wanted to be free. I found this true in England. I saw it in South Africa. I encountered it in the Middle East and it overwhelmed me in India.

In England, however, there was political freedom and economic slavery. In South Africa I discovered political freedom and economic opportunity for only a chosen few. In the Middle East liberty was skin deep and economic serfdom was profound. In India I found the worst possible disequilibrium between the two freedoms. Political democracy was practically non-existent. Poverty lay over the great sub-continent like a miasma, charged with the stenches of a thousand hatreds and ten thousand wrongs.

But everywhere there was hope. Everywhere I found in the hearts and minds of men the emotions and the visions of a noble dream. All had their eyes fixed on the distant horizon of a world of free and equal men whose freedom and equality would be both political and economic.

In England particularly I saw this dream through the eyes of workers and clerks and even of members of the so-called upper classes. From their bomb-tortured existence, from sacrifice and hard work, Englishmen had distilled their great vision. Welsh miners hoped they might be able after the war

to send their children to the universities too, as the gentle-folk do. And the gentlefolk who had witnessed the nobility of their social inferiors wanted desperately to remake England spiritually, politically, economically just as, after the bombers have gone and the lights come up again, they will rebuild England physically.

In South Africa I met Negroes who wanted to share the White Man's Burden rather than *be* it. In the Middle East I talked with Arabs who sought nationhood and the right to grow as free peoples, free particularly of the overhanging shadow of imperial exploitation. And in India the shout for freedom was a symphony with contrapuntal cries of hunger and pain.

Nowhere did I find men fighting for empires or the preservation thereof. I didn't find them among the men of the British Isles, or among the South Africans, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and Free Frenchmen, Greeks, Poles, and others I encountered on the battlefields of the Western Desert of Egypt.

There were a few among them, of course, who wanted things preserved as they were. These were the propertied men and the older men who could not look beyond the boundaries of their lands, bank accounts, and titles. Incidentally, even among these I found a majority who believed the changes which would come would make for a better world than the one they had known, for War and Death are great levelers. The impact of bombs jars men loose from old ideas.

Recently, however, a new force was introduced into this Gargantuan struggle. It is expressed by great and powerful men who control the affairs of our ally, Great Britain. The moral factors which determined the presence in the Mediterranean and in the Pacific of hundreds of thousands of vital Americans preclude any selfishness on our part. We do not fight for the acquisition of empire. We do not even fight, primarily, for the retention of markets. Aware as we may be of

the necessity of regaining certain sources of raw materials, we still do not fight principally for such sources. We fight to make men free and to retain that structure of government and life generally which will enable us after the victory to continue to be masters of our own destiny.

But Winston Churchill has said that he "did not become the First Minister of the British Government to preside at the liquidation of the British Empire." If that be Great Britain's object in this war, then all free men and men hopeful of being free must become suddenly very cynical indeed. If Mr. Churchill had preservation of the British Empire in mind as his principal function as Prime Minister from the moment he assumed power we have been greatly deceived.

Free men everywhere hope this is a war which will so alter our social and economic and political structure that we may have the broadest possible application of Democratic principles. To say that we fight to preserve anything seems to me a negative ideal. To fight for change and reform seems, instead, something eminently worth while, exquisitely positive.

I am disturbed, therefore, as all freedom-loving peoples everywhere must be disturbed, by Mr. Churchill's unexpected public confession of his uncompromisingly Tory and reactionary point of view. But I am not discouraged. Last year in my world-wide travels I met and saw and talked with leaders and workers, generals and soldiers, and I returned with the firm conviction that we would win the war and the peace. This year, after traveling more than 50,000 miles in South America and in Africa, I return still hopeful that the forces at work are bigger than Mr. Churchill and that they will not be thwarted in their steady progress toward victory and toward global reforms including the abolition of the evils of imperialism.

This year, as last, I have seen much that is evil. I've witnessed blunders costly in human life and human toil. But I have also seen progress—reforms in the Middle East, the construction of

an air-freight supply which crosses and recrosses the entire continent of Africa, the arrival on distant battlefields of superior American weapons, and the injection into this war of something it so desperately lacked—the American offensive spirit.

And I saw in Rio de Janeiro in January 1942 the fruition of an American policy which may serve as a pattern for the creation of the New World we all so earnestly desire. It was in Rio that I realized, without knowing it at the time, the measure of the power of the moral concepts which are driving us inexorably toward victory. In South America, as in Africa, I encountered, also, the obstacles in the path of that victory. These barriers lie not only in the path of victory but also in the way of the peace.

My hope that they will be swept out of the way rests in the capable hands of the men who echo the world-wide shout of the common man for a square deal.

You hear the cry of justice for the common man from the soldiers and workers of all of the American nations, even from the common people of isolationist Argentina. I've heard it in Africa, from the Gold Coast to the Cape, from Mozambique to the Western Desert. This upsurge of the common man, more universally apparent than ever before, is our great strength; as great, at least, as our mechanical genius and industrial power.

Meanwhile, we are learning the craft of actual fighting which will eventually translate those powers into victories, but we have gained our paramount strength in the past year from the inescapable fact that this has become a people's war.

Consider why this is so. The burdens and responsibilities of the war have been more widely distributed upon a greater number of individuals. One hundred and thirty-two million Americans have entered the war. A great army is being trained, equipped, and shipped to where it can fight. The efforts of more than one hundred million additional Americans, those

who live south of the Rio Grande, have been enlisted in our common cause.

It should be obvious to the cynics who do not believe we can win the war that in the year since the United States and her good neighbors entered the war it has not been possible to realize the full measure of the collective effort of those additional millions of workers and soldiers. Yet their contribution has already made itself felt. Russia, although she has not received the numbers of planes and tanks and guns and the quantities of food we and the British have committed ourselves to supply, has been able to stand off the Nazi-Fascist enemy largely because of our assistance.

The Middle East was saved last summer by American planes and equipment and by the technical and combat contribution of American workmen and American soldiers.

Our aid to China has been neither as great nor as effectively distributed as it should have been or was promised. But even here our presence in the war has been felt by the enemy.

In the Pacific theater our presence has saved Australia and given us and the British time to prepare an offensive against Burma. Our presence in the Pacific may have saved India. Here, as in the Middle East, there are dangers, grave dangers, and it would not be surprising if, in ensuing months, we receive sad news from any or all of the theaters involved.

Our reinforcements in men, planes and tanks, and food to the British Isles have insured that these cannot be taken by the enemy as indeed they might have been otherwise, and the creation in England of an Allied Army in which Americans are present in strength has provided at least one invasion force, the one which attacked in the Mediterranean.

The pace of sabotage has increased all over Europe.

Our presence in the war has brought this about. In the hearts of men, starved and beaten though they be, there is new hope and new courage to resist the process of Nazification. We—you and I—have done that. A balance sheet of the war, cast up

in terms of military and naval victories and defeats, would, I fully realize, be much in our disfavor.

But I believe you will see that, in spite of mistakes sometimes of almost criminal proportions, we have been winning the war, the physical war. What documentation of evidence to the contrary you will find in this book is intended only to make you realize the enormity of the burden which rests upon the individual and collective shoulders of America. Only we can win the war.

I do not say this as an implied slur upon the British. Their resistance of more than three years has enabled us to summon the power represented in weight of men and weapons to tip the scales against the Hun and his henchmen. We could no more win this war without Britain than they could win it without us. Let us be certain of that.

But I do not believe Americans generally realize how great must be their share of effort, their sacrifice in blood and money, in sweat and steel, work and weapons, before victory can be won. I believe that, armed with such knowledge, Americans will work and fight harder and therefore more quickly bring an end to this foul and inhuman process called war, perhaps for all time.

My great fear is not that we can, or will, or might lose the war militarily. It is that we are losing it politically; spiritually if you like. Such a defeat may be as disastrous as a military one.

I need not tell you that in the task of assembling most of the information contained herein I've been shot at and bombed, strafed and shelled, but that isn't important. What happens to reporters isn't important, not even when they die. What is important is what they see and learn.

I've had my troubles with censorship, but censors and their evil art are the flora and fauna of a correspondent's habitat and should not be news at this late stage in the art of foreign correspondence.

And concerning misuse of censorship I shall have something

to say in this book. I find, however, my irritation with censors and censorship diminishing. Perhaps I'm getting old! Or perhaps I've learned that a correspondent's battles with censors are not nearly so important as what he manages, by careful writing and good judgment, to get past the barriers into print and into microphones.

I shall endeavor to bore you as little as possible with my troubles with the villains of the blue pencil. Some of the crimes they perpetrate, however, you must know, to the end that you will be better able to read and understand the dispatches of the men who risk their lives to tell you the truth and who gamble their sanity in seeking to obtain from censors approval of what they write.

FRANK GERVASI

But Soldiers Wondered Why

CHAPTER I

Challenge to the Americas

THERE AROSE upon Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor the question of what the members of the Pan American Union would do about it. Political unity among the twenty-one nations of the Union was expressed and implied in every convention, treaty, and protocol signed by them.

But would the countries south of the Rio Grande regard Japan's act of war against the United States an aggression against all the Americas? There was some doubt that they would. The United States faced what might have been a serious blow to our prestige, to our geographic security, and to our industrial war machine. We needed Latin America's raw materials.

Axis propaganda against the United States and Great Britain had been extremely effective, thanks to German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish agents and diplomats. Ablest and most effective of these were the Spaniards, to whom most of South America, except Brazil, was tied by a common language, blood relationship, and a common religion—Roman Catholicism.

The greed of some American business firms who'd exploited the oil and mineral wealth of nations like Mexico and Chile to the economic disadvantage of the workers of these countries had made it easy for Nazi-Fascist elements to foster hatred of the Yanqui Gringo. Among many South American countries there existed—and still exists—a mistrust of American policy. All suspected us of imperialism.

It was a comparatively simple matter for Axis and neo-Axis agents to whip up isolationism and build up a conviction among the most important countries of the nether continent that their future lay in neutrality. This neutral sentiment had already manifested itself strongly enough to cause our State Department to wonder whether South America would follow us into war against Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Upon a technicality one of the members of the Pan American Union called for a conference of the foreign ministers of the member nations to discuss their position in the light of developments in the Pacific. And in January 1942, a little more than a month after Japan had attacked us, the foreign ministers of the score of nations of this hemisphere met in Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian capital.

At that very moment the United States stood at a fork in the road. Failure of the conference, or even a partial success, would necessarily have meant:

(1) Proportionately less molybdenum, beef, tin, copper, rubber, coffee, sugar, and many other raw materials of war and, consequently, a comparable reduction of Democracy's chances of winning the war.

(2) Loss of political prestige abroad. The enemy would have made much capital of an American diplomatic defeat. Such a reversal would have automatically bolstered Nazi-Fascist prestige in the eyes of the peoples of conquered Europe and have weakened these peoples' resistance to the conqueror. Prestige may not seem important, particularly in wartime, but prestige is the stature of a nation measured in terms of military and economic effectiveness. Loss of prestige, of the esteem and respect of fellow nations, affects the loser's standing among its neighbors in the world for decades, centuries after the crisis is past.

(3) Physical geographic danger. Assume that our neighbors in this hemisphere had *all* voted against us at the Pan-American Conference. We would have had to occupy Mexico and

conquer Central America, at least, to regain and keep the Panama Canal. Assume that only those nations on the southern continent proper had turned against us. We would have had to take military measures to prevent the establishment on South American soil of enemy military, naval, and air forces.

It is not exaggeration to say that the Axis had reason to hope for a stampede against American leadership in this hemisphere. It had planted hundreds of thousands of nationals on the continent, particularly in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. Loyal to their adopted countries though most of these were, there were among them a sufficient number of Quislings to insure internal material support when the time came for direct Axis action.

This was particularly true of the Japanese, of whom there are approximately 750,000 in Brazil, Argentina, and Peru. Germany and Italy counted heavily on their large German and Italian populations in Brazil and Argentina. They had good trade relations with these countries and excellent communications. Less than eighteen months ago the Linha Aerea Transatlantica Italiana still operated an air service between Dakar and Natal. The line carried Axis spies and propaganda into South America and brought out rare minerals and valuable information for the war, and propaganda machinery of Berlin and Rome.

Italy and Germany needed the wheat, coffee, beef, and cotton of South America as South American countries required Germany's machinery and Italy's cheap automobiles. The economies of the two sides were complementary and there were therefore substantial reasons why, setting aside idealistic or ideological arguments, South America should have swung over to the other side.

That this did not eventuate helps to prove, I believe, that love of freedom is stronger in the hearts of the masses than love of profit. South America could very comfortably have allied itself with the Axis. There was little we could have done

about it. We would have had to scatter our military and naval and aerial power over still another distant front. We fight already on five fronts, and we might have had to fight on six or twelve, for South America is a very big place. It's a three-day flight from Natal to Miami.

South American nations had had a poor measure of British military and naval power, and ours was still, to them, an unknown quantity in a complex mathematical formula the result of which was to be victory. Victory, in fact, then appeared nearly certain for the Axis, rather than for our side. In all truth there were many military men below the Rio Grande who lost no time in informing their governments of this obvious fact, using the argument that victory seemed militarily inevitable for the Axis as a powerful reason for staying out of the war, abandoning American leadership, or making outright alliances with one or all members of the Unholy Three. Such forces were at work in Brazil and are still laboring in Argentina.

Not the least of the possible catastrophes of a reversal at Rio de Janeiro would have been the loss of the air-transport bridge Brazil's entry into the war on our side provides. It is no longer a military secret that from the Brazilian bulge eastward toward Africa our bombers, medium and heavy, leap the South Atlantic for the battlefields of Northwest Africa, the Middle East, Russia, India, and China.

That none of the possible catastrophes eventuated is due largely to a number of vigorous, honest men. I would be foolish were I to assert that the Pan-American Conference of January 1942 was a complete success. It accomplished this: *All* of the members of the Pan American Union agreed in principle to break off diplomatic, political, and economic relations with the Axis. The delegates agreed to submit recommendations to that effect, which would at least seal the hemisphere against the escape of military information valuable to the enemy, to their respective governments.

Nineteen out of the twenty-one nations concerned acted on

their resolutions. One, Argentina, is still a holdout and therefore a center of Axis espionage and propaganda in our hemisphere. Chile, another holdout, appears gradually to be edging into our orbit, and it is a safe prediction that before long this country will be in the camp of the United Nations, if not as a belligerent, at least as one which has eschewed Axism.

Significant in the action taken at Rio in those golden January days is that it met with the indisputable approval of the common peoples of the nations involved. I will go so far as to say that what happened might never have happened had not the common man in Mexico, the Central American states, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Ecuador desired it.

You could hear their clamor against tyranny in their newspapers and in demonstrations. And you could hear their hearts and minds speak through the voices of men like Ezequiel Padilla of Mexico, Oswaldo Aranha of Brazil, and the penguinsque Dr. Alberto Guani of Uruguay.

To them and in a smaller but important measure to the suave, tall Undersecretary of State, Sumner Welles, must go the greater share of the credit for what happened at Rio a year ago. What they did cannot be measured adequately for, fortunately, we have not had to experience what could have been a disastrous defeat to our foreign policy and a perhaps catastrophic blow to our hopes for victory, to the hopes of all men for a new world governed by those Christian principles which form the basis of the Democratic life.

But of all those who spoke their thoughts and the thoughts and aspirations of Americans—of all Americans from Hudson Bay to Tierra del Fuego—the most eloquent, the ablest, the most human was Ezequiel Padilla.

We started winning the war in January 1942 in Rio de Janeiro. You can thank Padilla at least as much as any other single leader in our hemisphere for that.

CHAPTER II

A Prophet Emerges

EVERY FEW DECADES the hot, tired earth of Mexico produces a man to stir your imagination. It yielded Benito Juárez and in a capricious moment it gave us Pancho Villa. It mothered Francisco Madero and bore Emiliano Zapata. It has borne another exciting personality, an earthy saint named Ezequiel Padilla, warm as his own soil with love of freedom and smoldering with dreams for building a new and better world.

Padilla is a towering Indian, straight and clean-limbed as a pine. He was born fifty-two years ago in a village called Coyuca de Catalán in the state of Guerrero, a village so small you won't find it on any map. His mother Evarista was a schoolteacher, and his father Mariano was a lawyer. They were poorer than the *campesinos* whose adobe huts they shared, for none among the villagers of Coyuca de Catalán could afford to pay for legal services or for teaching.

Padilla knew hunger as a child. He grew up with the *campesinos*, whose hunger for land, food, and security became his own, and as a youth he fought beside Zapata in that great Mexican's rebellion against the feudalism that kept his countrymen landless.

"It's not plenty," Padilla says, "which tears out the heart and vitality of a country—it's scarcity."

This was an incongruous figure, therefore, to come to the Pan-American Conference of Foreign Ministers in Rio de

Janeiro. Here was a revolutionary with a revolutionary's determination to alter the order of things, and Pan-American conferences never materially changed the course of men's lives in the Americas. Traditionally such conventions served merely as sounding boards for the petty political aspirations of the delegates.

But Padilla came and Padilla conquered. He did it with a voice that makes men's pulses quicken, and with simple, sincere words. If ever a man talked himself into the hearts and minds of other men Padilla did it at the Rio conference. When he arrived he was just another diplomat, handsomer than most but unknown north of the Rio Grande or the mouth of the Tehuantepec. He left it a hero, his name whispered, talked, and shouted by diplomats, politicians, and correspondents as that of Mexico's man of destiny, America's man of the future.

Rio's night clubs dedicated songs to him; mobs cheered him in the streets. Crowds waited for him to leave and enter his hotel or the Palacio Tiradentes, Itamaraty Palace, the casinos, or the cafés. Wherever he went in the land where women normally look at men as frankly as men look at women anywhere else, Padilla was a wow, and there were times when his heroic halo was down over one eye and when streamers of confetti fluttered from it, to his combined embarrassment and enjoyment.

He stood in a suit the color of coffee-stained milk on the podium of the one-time Chamber of Deputies in the Palacio Tiradentes. He stood between two effulgent blobs of pink orchids from Petropolis and faced the restive white-suited politicians and diplomats of twenty-one Americas. The galleries were crowded with wives, relatives, and friends of the delegates, and with newspapermen.

Brazil is a photographer's heaven, and the area in front of the podium was jammed with cameramen who exploded flash bulbs in Padilla's face, climbing on the railing of the rostrum,

on chairs, desks, and ladders for new angles. Padilla was too far behind and too far to the right of the public-address system's microphone, and the assembly couldn't hear what he said for the first few minutes.

No speaker ever started under greater difficulties. The audience had already heard too many speeches, including one by the tiresome opportunist from Chile, Juan Bautista Rossetti, and another by our Mr. Welles which, while packed with meaty promises of wartime military and financial subsidy, was too long and in a language few understood—English.

It was hot, and white-coated flunkies wearing white cotton gloves circulated with fruit juices and sweating glasses of ice water. Other flunkies turned enormous floodlights on and off for the ubiquitous newsreel men. Suddenly Padilla got the range of a microphone or somebody moved it nearer to him. Even Argentina's studiedly aloof Enrique Ruiz Guiñazú stopped swiveling in his chair and strained interestedly toward Padilla, whose voice was saying each word as clearly as the crack of a pistol: "Those who have fallen in Wake and the Philippines have not fallen merely to defend the honor and sovereignty of the United States. They have also fallen to defend human liberties and the common destiny of America."

What happened at that moment is something none who saw and heard it will ever forget. The conference, with the impact of a wave crashing against a sea wall, surmounted the barricades of bauxite and molybdenum, tin and beef, fifth columnism and intramural strife over violated boundaries that had been building from the moment the delegates arrived.

Forgotten were the vague phrases about Simon Bolivar and *solidaridad* and the back-door bargaining for trade favors. The conference exploded into a shouting, cheering, yelling mass of men and women, diplomats and politicos, correspondents and fancy dolls who had come to hear their heroes do their puny political stunts. They rose from their chairs as

though simultaneously charged with an electric current. They applauded with hands stiff with excitement.

For the next twenty minutes Padilla held before them the glowing coals of his dreams. He told them they must not be interested only in the construction of guns, planes, and tanks, but in the creation of the free man of America on whose forehead must shine the dignity of being free. In his Castilian, swung to the Indian rhythm of Mexico, he talked of opening the Dantesque doors of the prisoners of Guiana—"For only men in search of liberty should come to this continent." He demanded that an end be put forever to economic slavery in America, and he came as close as a foreign minister dared in asking for a unanimous declaration of outright war against the Axis with the words: "It is not noble to pretend that the liberties which are the patrimony of justice of the Americas be defended by someone else while we retire into egoism and false security. It is no longer time to defend material riches; it is the hour of sacrifice."

He came down from that podium with a composed face and stooped shoulders and walked quietly to his desk. He sat down slowly. But he was brought to his feet as the applause and shouts grew, and then he stood by his desk, unsmiling, nodding almost imperceptibly to the ovation that seethed about him. For five minutes he stood there, and then Brazil's crafty Oswaldo Aranha, the Jim Farley of the convention to which Padilla played Roosevelt, closed the meeting. He had purposely called on Padilla last, for he and Welles, alone of scores of diplomats present, knew Padilla's power.

I have seen demonstrations both staged and spontaneous in Rome, Berlin, Paris, and London. I can compare what I saw in that obsolete Chamber of Deputies in Rio only to that certain day in the spring of 1935 in London when England's late King George rode through the city's streets in the Silver Jubilee procession, and usually self-contained Englishmen shouted

their love of their king. From the moment Padilla sat down until the day he emplaned for Mexico City the conference was emotionally and spiritually his. If Aranha was the convention's brain, Padilla was its heart, although his contribution was not altogether merely that of the diplomatic rabble-rouser. When Welles was faced with a choice between accepting pledges of a total break with the Axis from all of the Americas except Chile and Argentina or a unanimous but milder recommendation of rupture, Padilla induced the American to work for the compromise, and at the end of the conference, Padilla's wisdom became clear.

Had Welles and Aranha pressed for adoption of a strongly worded resolution demanding an immediate break with the Axis nations, Chile and Argentina would not have agreed, and Germany, Italy, and Japan would have been given the satisfaction of seeing a disunited New World. The formula Welles and Aranha and Padilla finally worked out obtained commitments from both Chile and Argentina for a diplomatic break with the Axis and clean-cut agreements to sever economic, financial, and cultural relations with the enemy powers. A semblance of complete unanimity, despite Chile's and Argentina's mental reservations, was obtained, and the final score was twenty-one to zero instead of nineteen to two.

Mexico and Brazil—in fact all the Americas except Chile and Argentina—had every intention of translating those resolutions into laws. The ink wasn't dry on the acts signed in Rio before Brazil was cracking down on fifth columnists. Police in Montevideo and Bogotá were rounding up Fascists and Nazis, and most Latin-American countries had already suppressed enemy-subsidized newspapers and news agencies, and had outlawed "cultural societies," through which the Axis sabotaged hemisphere unity.

But the fifth column remains in South America. With the departure of ambassadors, ministers, and consuls of the Axis it will lack leadership, it is true, but 150,000 able-bodied Japs

who remain in Brazil, for instance, don't need leadership from outside to do what their brothers did in Honolulu and Manila.

Unhappily, the fifth column in South America isn't the chimera some people thought it. Padilla, for one, doesn't underestimate it. He told me at the conference that it is the greatest single danger remaining in this hemisphere. He said he believed its principal areas of influence and potential danger to be Argentina, the United States, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile, in that order.

In his closing speech, Padilla pleaded with the Argentine and Chilean delegates to urge their governments to translate the resolution they signed at Rio into laws which would send the Axis diplomats home from Santiago and Buenos Aires; it was Padilla, above any other single diplomat at the conference, who morally and spiritually isolated the former proud leader nation of the Pan-American group. He never failed to single out Argentina for comment and cleverly veiled criticism. He is a master of indirection. He called the near-breakdown of the conference over Argentina's objections to the wording of the resolution which was finally adopted, a "grammar drammer" and he razzed Ruiz Guiñazú as a comma hunter.

What Padilla and Aranha accomplished between them was to wrest away Argentina's traditional leadership of Latin America. It was clear throughout the conference that the new leaders of the nations south of the Rio Grande were Mexico and Brazil.

Those who know their South America say that all this is bound to have repercussions in Argentina where President Ramón S. Castillo rules only because of the support of a pro-Fascist army clique. They insist that the people of Argentina won't long endure the moral humiliation of Argentina's isolation, which will come unless Castillo takes Padilla's advice and falls into step with the other Americas.

It was open recognition of Mexico's new status in Latin-American affairs that helped to build Padilla into the stature

of a big-league statesman, but his is the kind of politics that will cause arch-Conservatives everywhere some violent headaches. He is a Liberal. Some will call him a Communist and a Red and lots of other undeserved names. He is merely a man who was hungry once and doesn't want to be hungry again and doesn't want his fellow men to be hungry.

He has a gift for making friends that reminds you of Heywood Broun. He says he'd rather have a friend than all the riches in the world. He likes Beethoven and Bach and Mexican folk music, and he smokes long, fragrant cheroots. He says he has no major vices. "But I'm afraid I have a great many small ones," he adds. Among these is his fondness for dancing. While in Rio he learned to do the hippy-hoppy dance Carmen Miranda immortalized, known as the samba.

"That," he says, "I consider one of my major conquests in Brazil."

He likes orchards. He likes to walk under fruit trees with the sun shining through the blossoms and he likes flowers on woody stems. He is Mexico's best pistol shot; he rode with Pancho Villa, whom he called the Attila of the Mexican revolution, and he swims like Johnny Weissmuller.

Padilla plays golf in the low eighties. He worries about his low scores. He says it means he pays too much attention to his golf. He's a good poker player too. He played with newsmen on the special plane which took the American delegation and correspondents to Rio. He won small sums from the correspondents, going from one to the other of several tables set up in compartments aboard the strato-clipper. He even won some from Welles' valet. Welles remained in his own compartment brooding beside a huge basket of fresh fruit given him by Pan-American's Juan Trippe.

Padilla believes the United States is the country that embodies all the hopes of the world. He says the United States of America contributes to civilization a profound concept and awareness of individual liberty, as Mexico contributes a highly

developed sense of social justice, and Brazil contributes complete racial tolerance. Argentina, he says, has little to offer the world except "bold and unnecessary arrogance—there's already too much arrogance in this world."

He is one of those people who do not believe the world is going to pot. There isn't a cynical fiber in his whole make-up. He believes, instead, that society is developing slowly and painfully toward the millennium nobody believes can be attained. He has said, "The United States is the most socially conscious nation in the world. It has developed a great legal system for the dispensation of individual justice and the defense of personal liberties. We are gradually emerging into a new phase. We are learning that we must have tribunals which will dispense justice collectively as we are learning that political democracy is not enough, that we must have with it economic democracy as well."

Although revolutionary from 'way back, Padilla is new to Mexican top-drawer politics. He became Avila Camacho's Minister of Foreign Affairs after being Deputy Senator and Attorney General and from 1930 to 1933 Minister to Italy. Mussolini? "An able man until Hitler pressed out his bones."

Padilla's hair is straight, dry, loosely combed, and dark brown. It crowns a head that has the nobility of the Aztec and something of the Castilian. He tells you frankly that his father was an Indian, but somehow, since he doesn't mention it, you don't come right out and ask him if his mother also was an Indian. He has a large face with a high forehead, a large nose, and a well-formed mouth which breaks readily into a smile. His skin is the color of bronze and he speaks in the cultured accents of the cultured man that he is.

His education began at home. His mother taught him to read and write. He worked his way through elementary schools and won a scholarship to the Sorbonne. His French is faultless, although his English is halting. He studied international law at Columbia University, and it was while he was

in New York as a student that for a month he knew hunger. He couldn't find a job. But he learned to love America.

Although he likes night spots, he is a family man. He speaks feelingly of his wife and five children. Two are grown and married. Two children are tots. The fifth is dead, but he says quietly, with his Indian sincerity, "He is dead, but he's with us still. He's still part of the family."

He wants to see the creation in this hemisphere of a United States of all the Americas. One hard-boiled member of the American delegation to the Pan-American Conference said of this idea and of Padilla, "Yeah, and give me Padilla for President." Which may seem a bit overenthusiastic unless you realize, as about thirty American correspondents realized, that the tall, well-tailored, and immaculate Padilla is one of those men about whom you say and think things that are usually said and thought after a man's dead.

CHAPTER III

Brazilian Democrat

THEY SAY of Oswaldo Aranha that he is as brave as he is intelligent, and as candid as he is handsome. In Rio the Brazilians see in their foreign minister a shootin', tootin' Gaucho who has acquired the manners of a grand seigneur, the eloquence of a William Jennings Bryan, and the diplomatic astuteness of a Disraeli. They see reflected in him their own uninhibited appreciation of lovely women or good horseflesh, or the excitement of a tall stack of milreis riding a number at the gaming table.

Luckily Aranha is a far more substantial citizen than the political D'Artagnan they half imagine and half know him to be. Aranha is not a tall man but his shoulders sag slightly with a Lincolnesque stoop. His name, pronounced Aranyah, means "Spider." His name tells you more about him than his high forehead or the mane of white hair that gives him the air of a competent but aging actor.

Hardly the hothead the Brazilians like to picture him, he is as patient as his name implies. Patience, too, is visible in his amused hazel eyes, in his large nose, and in the well-formed mouth that smiles serenely over his protuberant cleft chin.

He has no affectations, although his courtliness and his exuberance in conversation give him something of the showman that non-Latins mistake for insincerity. But he comes by his good manners honestly as the son of Ranchero Euclides

Egydio de Souza Aranha and Luisa de Freitas Valle, a grand old lady who rules her large family with the ramrod respectability of the Old World matriarch that she is.

It was she who made chain-smoker Aranha give up his cigarettes. She suffered from diabetes but liked sweets and ate cream puffs on the sly. She became desperately ill, and her son pleaded with her to give up cream puffs.

“Okay,” she said. “You stop smoking and I will quit sweets.” Oswaldo hasn’t smoked since.

The Aranha family was Latinly fecund—Oswaldo was one of seventeen children. The family owned huge tracts of land in the vicinity of Itaqui, near the Brazilian frontier with Uruguay, in Rio Grande do Sul, where Oswaldo learned many things.

There, in what was then the capital of contraband and bandits, and of that freedom of action and spirit born of space and remoteness from the law, Oswaldo learned how to shoot a revolver, ride a horse, and lasso a steer. There, too, he first learned about freedom. His education was to be completed years later in Washington, where he went as ambassador at the age of forty in 1934. He is forty-nine now.

That particular phase of Oswaldo’s life which began at forty makes him an outstanding American, and something more. Down in Rio an American is anyone who was born in or has become a citizen of one of the Americas. If you happen to be a native or naturalized citizen of the United States, that means you are a *Nord-Americano*. You know no exclusive right to the label American.

This is a new concept—this business of considering themselves American—which has sprung into being in the past decade among the nations between the Rio Grande and Tierra del Fuego. Those who gave impetus to this new Americanism were Franklin D. Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, Sumner Welles, and our Oswaldo.

The creation of a new and great Brazil is largely the work

of Getulio Vargas, although Oswaldo Aranha, he whom they call the Spider, had a leg in that too. But Vargas, in his great generosity, must admit that Brazil's loyalty to Pan-Americanism is due more directly to Oswaldo, and that the meeting of the foreign ministers of twenty-one American nations was largely a success when it might have been a resounding flop was substantially due to the Spider.

Aranha spun his webs and caught his flies and bound all with silk and delivered the lot at the feet of Uncle Sam, embodied in the austere person of Mr. Welles, himself a sort of beardless Uncle Samuel, who seemed always to quiver with a hidden excitement and to restrain an intense desire to sock troublemakers like Argentina's Ruiz Guiñazú in his aristocratic mouth. Aranha and perhaps Groton and Harvard—who knows?—save Mr. Welles the trouble. Not once, but on at least three occasions, the tired, hard-working Welles found reason to tell sweating newspapermen that Aranha had proved himself a “tower of strength” in the lobbying and logrolling and coffeehouse haggling that imparted to the conference of foreign ministers some of the unforgettable aspects of a meeting of the League Council in the days when the world was going diplomatically to hell at Geneva.

Yes, Rio for a feverish fortnight was much like Geneva used to be, although there were moments when the conference was as realistic as a Boss Hague confab with his lieutenants, just as at times it attained the splendid tomfoolery of a Louis Quinze court at Versailles.

Aranha was to have met Il Duce in Italy en route to his post in Washington. But Mussolini was with his invincibles at the 1934 maneuvers, and Aranha sailed for New York from Genoa without meeting Italy's strong boy.

Even his most intimate friends admit that the Aranha of those days was intrigued by the social aspects of Mussolini's Pullman-car revolution. What might have happened to Aranha, had he met and fallen under the spell of the personal

magnetism of the then-powerful Italian dictator, is still the subject of coffee-cup conjecture.

The Spider reveled in America's civilization, culture, and material success. He was impressed by our progressive ideas in government. Franklin Delano Roosevelt became his idol and the New Deal his ideal, and Fascism lost what might have been a dangerous exponent.

Aranha's contribution to the creation of Brazil's benevolent dictatorship is at least as great as that of Vargas'. It was Aranha who, pistol in hand, obtained submission of the military *cuartel* in Porto Alegre in politically volcanic Rio Grande do Sul in 1930. That was the revolution which moved Vargas into power.

Rio mobs lifted revolutionary leader Aranha on their shoulders and carried him to the balcony of the Grande Hotel. The organization of the revolution had been Aranha's. When the time came he stepped aside for his friend Getulio Vargas, as the better man to lead the nation.

The gifts he displayed in organizing the revolution that brought Vargas to the dictatorship he employed in whipping together the Latin-American nations in the common war effort against the Axis. It was Aranha, inspired by Welles, who composed certain boundary differences between Ecuador and Peru, and who talked turkey to Guiñazú. Aranha did the dirty work. Where Welles could not frankly tell Guiñazú that failure to join in the break with the Axis would mean economic isolation for Argentina—no gasoline, no tires, no loans—Aranha could and did.

Aranha's capacity for work was astounding. He was in his air-conditioned office in the Itamaraty Palace from nine o'clock every morning until seven or eight at night. He attended all of the unbelievably elaborate parties and dinners that threatened to stifle the conference in gaiety. He continued his work when he arrived home, talking, dictating, conferring until the early morning.

He explained, "I am the midwife of Latin-American unity and, as you know, it's not easy for a baby to be born. It takes time and patience. There is much pain and travail, and then the baby is born and everything is fine. We have many babies in this large family of ours."

What the Spider accomplished had been implicit in his behavior for years—a behavior which one day moved him to say, "Brazil will not remain neutral in the event of participation of any American nation in a war. . . ." At that moment, just as the world fell over the edge of the cliff into war, he spoke for Brazil as he had on a number of occasions spoken privately. They say in Rio that his uncensored tongue often got him into trouble. They call him "a master of indiscretion."

Certain elements in Brazil's leadership, particularly among the military, were impressed by Germany's military power and leaned toward the Axis in sympathy. Aranha outspokenly opposed them, but until now the fifth columnists were safe and Aranha was in danger. Now it is Aranha who sets the traps.

Welles came to Rio with one major objective in mind—to accomplish the unanimous and immediate rupture of all commercial, political, military, and diplomatic relations between the nations of the Pan American Union and the Axis. He came prepared to pay the price in economic subsidies and military, naval, and air protection for the allegiance the United States sought.

Welles knew beforehand that there would be two or three holdouts and that the most persnickety of the isolationists would be Argentina.

Very properly the opening meeting of the conference was held in Rio's famed Palacio Tiradentes—the Palace of the Tooth Puller, named for the Brazilian republican martyr whose statue faces the building. Pulling teeth was mild work compared to what Welles faced.

His mission was further complicated by the fact that in dealing with the sensitive jaws of such Latin-American diplomats as the proud, supercilious Ruiz Guiñazú, who has the face of a Castilian but the heart of an Italian, Welles could not openly be the dentist. The tooth-pulling had to be done by somebody else, hence Oswaldo.

A number of nations came to the conference knowing that they must inevitably follow the leadership of the United States, Mexico, and Brazil in a total rupture of relations with the Axis. They came, however, with reservations, qualifications, and all manner of escape clauses in the reams of resolutions they submitted to the conference committees.

Some of them based their reluctance toward participating in a multilateral break with the Axis on their vulnerability to attack. Chile, with her copper mines and industries strung along the narrow coastal plain and prey to potential Japanese raiders, was one of these. She demanded protection.

Others had individual political axes to grind. They wished to go on record with proposals and resolutions so weasel-worded that in the event of an Axis victory, Germany would know their reluctance and treat them more kindly.

Still others, like Peru and Ecuador, had private family quarrels to settle. Ecuador could very well have insisted that the Pan-American nations establish some means of keeping peace and respecting sovereignty among themselves before they acted to preserve the sovereignty of the hemisphere as a whole.

The frankest holdout was Argentina. Cynical Argentines like Liberal Damonte Taborda, political opponent of Conservative Ruiz Guiñazú, said the position of the delegation from Buenos Aires could be summed up as follows: "Argentina's Conservatives, who are completely out of step with the anti-Axis, pro-United States people of Argentina, know that if America wins the war they'll be treated decently anyhow, because Americans are decent people." They raised a stench at the conference to insure good treatment from the Germans

in the event the Germans win. Ruiz Guiñazú and his friends must have made pretty headlines indeed in the newspapers of Virginio Gayda and Joseph Goebbels.

There were other problems: the creation of hemisphere war-economy organization, of a sort of Western Hemisphere General Staff for actual military, naval, and air defense of the republics; the establishment of currency-stabilization funds to prevent the financial collapse of those nations which depended almost entirely upon foreign trade for economic survival; and the organization of a system of convoys and communications to keep goods moving between the nations involved. But these substantial problems were not so difficult as the more involved temperamental and psychological ones, which had to be solved before the Western Hemisphere could confront the Axis with the accomplished fact of Pan-American unanimity and thereby deal Germany, Japan, and Italy a moral and diplomatic blow only slightly less important than the military wallop Germany received from Russia.

In South America, Mussolini, Hitler, and the Mikado had built imperial dream castles, and it was Aranha—once a Fascist, by inclination if not conviction—who accomplished the political and diplomatic phase of the destruction of those dreams. There's still hard work ahead. There are fifth columns to be smashed and a hundred military and financial problems to be solved. But the foundation was laid in Rio for a new concept in international relations.

Maybe what Aranha helped smilingly, persuasively, and courageously to do in Rio will develop into the blueprint for that brave New World the democracies want to build.

CHAPTER IV

Brazil—A Study in Compromise

SINCE CAESAR'S DAY, dictators have demonstrated a passion for monuments. Stadia and statues have been their symbols. Modern dictators have varied the formula somewhat. They also build schools and universities. Getulio Vargas, the most advanced of the dictators, also goes in for office buildings.

Friends of mine who live in one of Rio de Janeiro's great modern apartment buildings—air-conditioned, with automatic elevators, marbled halls, and liveried doormen—had a beautiful view of the world's most magnificent harbor when they signed their lease. Six months later their view was obscured by the steel framework of one of Getulio's new office buildings. Nine months later, at American speed, the building was completed. Eleven buildings, most of them enormous slabs of concrete and glass, were erected in the vicinity of my friends' apartment house in eighteen months.

Brazilians think nothing of dynamiting entire hills to make way for progress. They even flattened out the old Morro de Gloria, where the Portuguese originally built the foundations of the noble city we know today. It was on the Hill of Glory that four centuries ago the French built redoubts against the Portuguese, who eventually conquered them.

Getulio's passion—everybody calls him Getulio (pronounced Je-too-leeo, with the accent on the "too")—for new buildings, schools, parks, stadia, and statues is somewhat Mussolinian. And yet there is a difference. This man Vargas is not just

another dictator. You are inclined to think he is when you see his portrait in every café and restaurant and public place in the country. That is also Mussolinian, Hitlerian, and Francoesque. But you see the difference when you discover, suddenly, that Getulio never wears a uniform. At the worst he might have a silk sash across his shirt front in the vivid colors of his country's flag.

Other differences between Getulio and his European counterparts emerge upon closer study. In the first place he, unlike either Mussolini or Hitler, gave his country reasonably honest government. This, you may be sure, neither the plundering Fascists nor the racketeering Nazis have done for their subjects. Patronage is rife in Italy and Germany. Italy never had an adequate air force largely because Fascist officeholders plundered the treasury. Mussolini was obliged to fire one air minister because the numbers of planes he produced were a fraction of what could have been built with the funds appropriated for the purpose. In Nazi Germany, men who were pauper guttersnipes when Hitler came to power are fabulously rich men today—Goering and Goebbels are but two of several score examples. There is little patronage racketeering in Brazil, certainly no more and probably much less than we have in our own country.

Close study of Brazil's social, economic, and political structure reveals an amazing fact. Brazil was obliged to turn to strong central government for reasons remarkably akin to those which gave Communism to Russia. Geographically enormous, populated by an almost illiterate people easily swayed by unscrupulous clerics and exploited by abnormal politicians, Brazil, like Russia, was moving steadily downhill until Vargas, like Lenin, halted the process.

In form today, despite external resemblances to Mussolinian and even Hitlerian totalitarianism, Brazil's government is more nearly congruent to the Corporativism of Portugal's Salazar than to the Corporativism of Mussolini's Italy or the Nazi-

Socialism of Hitler's Germany. Like Salazar, Vargas isn't given to uniforms, although, like Il Duce's ex-toughies, Brazil's police wear shields bearing the symbolic bundle of tied sticks and hatchet. Like Hitler, Vargas controls the press and baits non-existent Communists, but, unlike Hitler, Vargas tempers his totalitarianism with a great humanity and a passionate interest in the welfare of the common people.

Let us examine this nation of compromise and paradox more closely and determine little Getulio's sources of power. You will see that, despite dictatorial externals, Brazil's feet are set rather on the road to a new Democracy than on that which leads to either Nazism or Fascism in their European forms.

Brazil is technically a dictatorship—strictly a one-man show. In the sense that the bland little Vargas makes all decisions and issues all orders, this is true. But not all of Brazil's internal and external policies originate with the smiling dictator, who is so mild a fellow that he is neither loved nor hated violently and is therefore likely to rule hitherto politically brawly Brazil for the rest of his natural and healthy life.

Being a smart politician, he rules for the people, insofar as he can without yielding power, although he has suppressed government by the people. He insists that his own particular brand of dictatorship constitutes government of the people.

Vargas, who is pleasant, short, stout, with a hooked nose and copper-colored hair, contrasts sharply with the pompous Mussolini, who never asks interviewers, or any but the most important of visitors, to sit down. Meeting Vargas is like meeting a man whom you know to be middle-aged but appears to be younger, and who might be a prematurely retired successful businessman or college professor or editor of some highly conservative journal dealing with economics. His manners, unlike Mussolini's, are impeccable. There is nothing of the brusque proletarian about him, but he differs from other dictators in one more subtle way. He has his own little brain trust whose members feed him information concerning the state of

mind of three principal sources from which Vargas derives his power—army, people, and Brazil's economic political relations with the United States. This last source of power is very important. Vargas knows that the future of his regime and the future of Brazil depend at least as much upon his friendship with the United States as upon the good will of his own nation's 45,000,000 people and the country's army.

So it develops that, while Brazil's government is outwardly totalitarian, actually it isn't. Vargas' power rests on those three legs. He can't bear down too heavily on any one of three supports without toppling off. And those who constitute the brain trusters, whose job it is to keep the legs of Vargas' tripod equalized, are three men and a girl. In a general way this sprawling, lush land that is bigger than all of the United States, plus an extra Texas, and that is profligately rich in the raw materials of peace and war, is ruled by three men and a girl.

One of the men is Aranha. Only Vargas outranks him in Latin America. Since Sumner Welles called Vargas "the best politician in America," that rates Aranha pretty high. He is Vargas' leg in America, the man who steered Brazil away from Europe and toward the United States. Aranha is the man of whom Adolf Hitler said, "I and the German Reich haven't a single enemy in all Brazil except that American, Oswaldo Aranha."

The other two men in Vargas' brain trust are relatively unknown to North Americans. They are Air Brigadier Eduardo Gomes and Commander Ernani do Amaral Peixoto, governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro and husband of Vargas' daughter, Alzira, who is the fourth member of El Presidente's intimate, tight little oligarchy. Because at the moment he is the dictator's direct pipe line into the army, Gomes rather than Peixoto—who, like Count Ciano, suffers from the handicap of being the boss's son-in-law—comes next in importance to Aranha.

Gomes might be an unknown to citizens of Wilmington,

Kankakee, or Oakland, but he is known in Brazil, from the jungles of the Upper Amazon to the coffee lands of São Paulo, as a hero. He distinguished himself in a dawn-to-dusk revolution against the unpopular reactionary President-elect Arthur da Silva Bernardes, renowned ballot-box stuffer, in July 1922. Then Lieutenant Eduardo Gomes held Copacabana fort in protest against the election of Bernardes, who was known to have dictatorial aspirations. Gomes, with a handful of fellow officers, was finally driven from the fort, which was assaulted by several hundred soldiers.

Gomes came out shooting. He was said to have been perforated by twenty-eight bullets. Actually he was wounded in one hand. Anyhow, he became the hero he is and the idol of Brazil's liberal element, which desires a return to republican government. This element is still very strong in Brazil, although so long as Vargas refrains from bearing down too hard and continues to follow the lines of his social reforms and industrial development of the nation, there is little chance that the Liberals will assert themselves. The Brazilian people's pro-Democratic feelings were very evident when Mexico's Padilla visited Rio and made his pro-American Liberal speeches.

I asked several Brazilians why they were enthusiastic about Padilla. They replied, "Padilla says for us all what we'd like to say ourselves. He is a Democrat." Gomes, more than any other single man in Brazil, represents this Liberal Brazilian element. Vargas also has recognized the people's regard for Gomes. Gradually Gomes, supported by anti-Fascist elements within the army, who looked upon former Army Chief of Staff Góes Monteiro and Minister of War Eurico Gaspar Dutra as fifth columnists, has risen to a position of prestige and power in the armed services.

The chances are that General Monteiro and General Dutra were not as much pro-Axis or Nazi-Fascist as they were mightily impressed with the success of the German military machine. For a long time they were convinced that the Axis

would win the war, and this was the powerful argument they presented to Vargas to keep Brazil's face turned toward Germany rather than the United States. With America's entry into the war, however, Gomes bobbed up from the depths of army councils.

It is Gomes who makes the final recommendations to Vargas regarding what equipment America shall send down to Brazil. It is Gomes who keeps prodding Vargas to make Uncle Sam keep his promises to provide Brazil with arms and munitions in return for Brazilian rupture of relations with the Axis and declaration of war against Germany, and complete economic and political co-operation in the Western Hemisphere's war effort. Gomes' friendship for the United States is indisputable. But Gomes can't forget he is a hero. He is pro-Brazilian before being pro-American, and behind the façade of solidarity with the United States there is a dramatic story in which tall, pedantic Gomes, a youngish man in his middle forties, is the central figure.

Around Gomes, for a long time, centered a dispute between wide-awake American military officers and the Brazil Government concerning the defense of the exposed fifteen-hundred-mile northeast coast of Brazil. At the easternmost point of this coast lies Natal, only a few hours' flight from Africa. The coast line itself constitutes an approach to the Panama Canal. Bases secured along it by the enemy would bring Axis planes within striking distance of the Venezuelan oil regions, Guiana bauxite deposits, and Allied bases in the Caribbean as well as the Canal itself. Natal is the springboard from which our bombers and transport planes leap across the South Atlantic. Brazil is only a stepping stone for the transfer of air power and supplies from Democracy's arsenal to Democracy's battle-fields.

United States Military Attaché General Lehman Miller and Air Attaché Lieutenant Colonel Thomas White for months were aware of the possibility of an enemy attack along the

edge of Brazil's bulge. They sought to obtain the Brazil Government's permission to bring down several squadrons of bombers and fighters with complements of fliers and technicians. They wanted to distribute them strategically at points where they could establish adequate patrols of Atlantic approaches to the coast line in order to safeguard against another Pearl Harbor, and also be ready to take the offensive in the event of an attack.

Gomes—whether on instructions from Vargas, or on his own initiative with Vargas' approval is not known—vigorously opposed Miller's and White's plans. Gomes insisted that planes be sent without American crews and turned over to Brazilian aviators. When American attachés pointed out that this was impossible because Brazilian fliers, good as they might believe themselves to be, aren't quite of the caliber required to pilot Flying Fortresses and our latest fighters, Gomes suggested that Americans could train Brazilian personnel. Patiently Miller and White explained that this would require a year or more and that meanwhile the danger to Brazil's security and to the hemisphere's defenses increased daily. It will be necessary for the Axis to attempt to sever communications between South America and Africa if it possibly can in order to interrupt the increasing flow of United States supplies to Africa.

Through the backing and filling which occurred during the negotiations with Gomes our military attachés failed to receive the full support of the State Department. Welles returned to Washington from the Rio conference flushed with what had been called the biggest diplomatic-political victory for the United States in more than a hundred years of Pan-Americanism. That victory was obtained at a price. In return for Brazil's political assistance in influencing Latin-American nations to keep promises they made one another at the last Pan-American Conference, the United States promised: First, a hundred-million-dollar loan; second, top priority rating for

Brazil above all other non-combatant nations; third, weapons and munitions and transport; and fourth, practically everything except the Liberty Bell. Gomes is out to collect.

In view of the passive but dangerous fifth column which existed in northeastern Brazil, American military people also wanted to send an adequate American expeditionary force to protect key points along the coast and to defend the bases which the Brazil Government had granted the United States. You have to be careful you don't call these bases "American." On this point Brazilians are very sensitive. Even hard-boiled Aranha bridles if you call them American bases. When a picture magazine captioned a photograph of one of the airfields as "American," Aranha wrote across a printed copy of the picture, "To the best of my knowledge, sovereignty over this region is still Brazilian." You see how matters stood.

Gomes, with Monteiro, Dutra, and, to a certain extent, Peixoto, had absolutely refused to accede to American recommendations that an expeditionary force be sent to Brazil.

The best Miller and White were able to obtain at first was permission to give six weeks'—six weeks'!—training to Brazilian pilots for our planes.

The safety of these areas directly concerned American military men. The Brazilian Army was known to be veined with pro-Axis elements. Also, the Brazilian Army was poorly equipped and couldn't possibly make an effective stand against an Axis force. Nevertheless, Brazilians insisted through Gomes the hero, the nationalist, the patriot, that they must be first to "shed blood in defense of Brazil."

To the pleas of Miller and White that the United States be allowed to send troops and technicians for a joint American-Brazilian defense of the nations' strategic areas, Gomes replied, "When and if we fail, then you may come—but not before."

The hand of Dutra, who had been the only member of the Brazilian cabinet to urge that Brazil join the other Latin-American countries only after the nation had received the

war materials the United States had promised, and who had insisted more or less firmly that it might be the best policy to remain completely neutral, was strengthened by the Axis attacks on American and Brazilian shipping. He was inclined to say, "I told you so."

Despite Dutra, the Axis had fulfilled Brazil's or Gomes' insistence that Brazilian blood must be the first to defend Brazil. It was spilled when the *Buarque* went down and when, a few days later, another Brazilian ship was sunk.

American military men and the most astute diplomats were optimistic that Aranha would overcome the objections of Gomes, and possibly also of Monteiro and Dutra, to the presence of American planes and troops on Brazilian soil. Latins, however, are sometimes unfathomable people. Following the Aruba attack ugly rumors spread throughout South America that perhaps the wisest of the nations which had participated in the recent Pan-American Conference were the holdouts, Chile and Argentina.

Brazil, however, has been patient about the fact that the United States hasn't delivered as much Lend-Lease armament and equipment as was promised. Their government recognizes the needs of our own armies at home and overseas and the high priority rating of Great Britain and Russia. Gomes' impatience in this respect isn't shared by Vargas or by Peixoto, who has also vigorously plunged into the job of cleaning up fifth columnism.

Peixoto is a solid, chunky man, about the same height as his father-in-law. He has slick black hair, wears horn-rimmed eyeglasses, and has a frank, steady look. His English is haltingly precise. He is a lawyer and has made a reputation as an excellent administrator. The belief that his wife wears the political and intellectual pants of the family is fiction. Fortyish, Peixoto stands firmly on his own legs, and if Vargas has any successor in mind, his son-in-law is the man. As governor of one of Brazil's twenty-two states, he would seem to be politically unim-

portant, but, obviously because of his close family relationship with Vargas, he is in a position to influence El Presidente as few other state governors can.

I talked with Peixoto in his office in the governor's summer place in Petropolis among the cool green hills above the capital. Beside him sat the lovely Alzira, who is twenty-six, dark-haired, and a bit on the plump side. She was pale and shiny-nosed from a full day's work doubling as her father's confidential secretary and her husband's aide.

Peixoto and his wife both admitted that Brazil was stiff with Germans and pro-Nazis and plastered with Japs. But both insisted that while danger existed from all the Axis elements—with the racially indigestible Japs most dangerous and the well-digested Italians the least harmful of all—agents, potential saboteurs, and fifth columnists were being disarmed, arrested, or otherwise rendered harmless. Peixoto pointed out that Brazil began cleaning up subversive elements long before the United States began exterminating its own fifth column.

Peixoto seemed to take a middle-of-the-road stand on whether American troops should be permitted to help in defense of Brazil. He said he believed it would be unwise for an American expeditionary force to be brought down at present. He said he wouldn't want to see an American army in Brazil "until the time comes." I asked him when he thought that would be. He replied, "At the proper time." Then his eyes narrowed a bit and he made this prophetic utterance: "It might be a good idea to take Dakar and occupy strategic points on the west coast of Africa. If Americans would do that, then the danger to Brazil and to the territorial integrity of the Western Hemisphere would be removed or materially reduced. Also for once, the democracies would be taking the initiative."

"Nothing succeeds," Alzira cut in, with a twinkle in her eye, "like success!"

Other figures besides Aranha, Gomes, Peixoto, and the

plumpishly petite Alzira move across the Brazilian stage. There is redoubtable Monteiro and cagey Dutra, both of whom have almost a physical horror that Brazil might be betting on the wrong horse in this war. There is Captain Aurelio Py, boss of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, who is reported to be doing a thorough job daily of breaking up fifth columnism in his heavily populated coffee, cotton, and cattle region. And there is astute Senhor Filinto Muller, chief of police, who is almost pathologically anti-Communist in a nation where there aren't many Communists, and who, for his Red-baiting and anti-Semitism, has earned the reputation of being pro-Axis. But insofar as Vargas, whose suave aloofness suggests that he is unapproachable, is influenced at all, he is currently influenced by these three men and the girl.

It is the girl's job among many other chores to choose what her father reads. She feeds him much American reading material and a balanced literary diet which included *Mein Kampf* and Adolf Hitler's conversations with Hermann Rauschning. In Rauschning's reports, Vargas read what the Nazis intended to do with Brazil—one of the few areas in the world left to colonize and exploit. It is estimated that four hundred million people could be supported in Brazil. Vargas took heed. Smart girl, Alzira!

CHAPTER V

Argentina—Axis Bridgehead

WHEN WAR CAME, finally, to Brazil after public clamor over Nazi sinkings of Brazilian ships forced the hand of Vargas, the lights were dimmed in blazing Rio and the mauve-and-canary-yellow cars of the younger hotbloods gradually left the tree-lined boulevards to the wheezing taxis and the austere black sedans of the officials. Brazilian motorists were rationed to five liters a day.

Rio's gaiety sobered. The snap went out of the samba. The world's most magnificent night clubs served thinner steaks, less wine. Brazil's capital, once one of the brightest in the world, pulled down its window blinds and quietly accepted its new role as a responsible member of the United Nations.

A day's flight away, in Buenos Aires, the scene changes. It's a long way from Buenos Aires to the war. It's one of the few big towns left where you can really forget the war. In Buenos Aires you can be fussy about the quality of a steak. You can quibble about the temperature of a bottle.

It's the new capital of that sleek and superficial and nightclubby civilization whose capital once was Paris. Here the tango replaces the apache dance, but the other props are familiar, from luxury shops on the midtown *avenidas* and pretentious cinemas and gaudy hot spots, down to the brothels along the water front they call the *boca*.

In Buenos Aires, complacency is a way of life. It is the new

capital of It Can't Happen Here. Its pleasureful smugness reminds you of Singapore, and its servility to the Axis recalls Vichy.

Here corruption is a craft. An honest election in Argentina is unknown. In August 1940 the Minister of War was implicated in a huge land fraud. In the elections the year before, the Conservatives stuffed the ballot boxes in the populous Catamarca Province so flagrantly that the late Radical President Ortiz was obliged to declare the voting invalid.

In Buenos Aires abundance is a plague. Every night enough food from hotel and restaurant tables is dumped into garbage cans to feed the entire London East End. This abundance insures that no one will grow hungry enough to risk his life to overthrow the anti-Democratic government of Dictator (nominally he's President) Ramón S. Castillo. The Liberal Ortiz was obliged by illness to turn the government over to Castillo, who is a Conservative—which means, in Argentina, that he was born on the right side of the stockyards.

Castillo is the godhead of the Conservatives. The Conservative party is the party of the 2,000 families who own all of Argentina, her broad corn and cattle lands, her forests of quebracho, her mills and mines. These 2,000 families rule a prodigiously rich country that is more than a third the size of the United States. They boss Argentina's 13,000,000 people.

In this war, as in the last, Argentina has adopted a policy of strict neutrality. She is certain she can keep out of the war and profit by doing so. As a nation that has traditionally sold more than she has bought, she can't believe that her cattle might suddenly be stricken with a plague, that her wheat might wither. She can't believe such things, although already her marketless corn rots in heaps in the fields to surfeit the rats that have multiplied until the Rockefeller Foundation fears an outbreak of bubonic plague in the provinces.

If the people of Argentina ruled their nation, Argentina would by now have broken all relations with the Axis. They

would have taken their place at the side of the peoples of Mexico and Central America and all the other countries of South America except Chile. They would have broken all diplomatic, political, and economic relations with the Axis countries. They would have helped to seal the Western Hemisphere against enemy attack and would have prevented leakage of vital information from the continents of North and South America to the enemy and enemy-dominated capitals abroad.

This, because the common people of Argentina, like common people nearly everywhere, are decent and hard-working and fundamentally believe in the same principles that resulted in the Bill of Rights. But the people are not sovereign in Argentina. Their votes are stolen. Their press is silenced by martial law arbitrarily imposed by Señor Castillo. He decreed martial law when the press demanded that Argentina honor her pledge to consider the attack against an American nation as an aggression against all the Americas.

Castillo saw that, as a consequence of Japan's attack, an effort would be made by the Big Three of the Pan American Union—the United States, Mexico, and Brazil—to rally all the Americas against the Axis. He knew the attempt would be made at the Rio conference.

Castillo's thermometer, the press, showed that the Argentines were warmly pro-Ally and pro-Democratic. They wanted to go to war against the Axis. At least they wanted Argentina's Foreign Minister Ruiz Guiñazú to vote with the other Americas for an immediate total rupture of relations with the Axis countries. Castillo—pious, glacially conservative, and essentially pro-Fascist—simply broke the thermometer. He scrapped Argentina's Bill of Rights, suppressing assembly, free speech, and a free press.

Economically, Argentina's isolationism in World War I didn't work any hardship on the Allies or on the Argentines. The Allies bought her beef, wheat, corn, hides, mutton, wool,

and small quantities of tungsten, and carried the goods away in their own bottoms. Argentina received in return what machinery and manufactured goods she needed, and Argentina's 2,000 families prospered. They hope to do so again.

But Argentina's neutrality in this war matters very much. For this, there are many reasons. One of them is the matter of communications. From Buenos Aires you can send cables and radiograms and you can telephone any Axis or Axis-controlled capital in the world.

Another is the fifth column. The Axis agents in Argentina are more numerous, better organized, and more influential than in any other Latin-American country. They are ably led and have plenty of money. They constitute an active menace to the security of the Western Hemisphere and to the success of the Allied war effort. And they're safe from arrest or deportation.

At least one other reason is economic: Argentina, as a neutral, is able to sell meat and wheat to starving Spain, for instance, but these food supplies seldom or never go to Spain at all, but to Germany and Italy. On the ships that ply between Buenos Aires and Spanish ports, moreover, travel the reinforcements for the Axis fifth column in Argentina.

Easy communications between Buenos Aires and enemy points, plus the existence of a fifth column so strong that it is tantamount to an Axis invasion of the South American continent, and the commercial pipe lines between Argentina and enemy Europe make that country an Axis base in this hemisphere.

This is why freedom of communications is probably the most important asset of enemy agents in Argentina. A ship sails from, say, Rio de Janeiro. Enemy agents transmit this information to Buenos Aires. That part is easy. There are at least fifteen high-powered clandestine Axis radio stations operating at strategic points on the continent. The German Embassy receives the information and transmits it, in code, to

Berlin. There the High Command communicates the message to a raider or a submarine. The ship that sailed from Rio is sunk.

Every scrap of information valuable to the enemy, legitimate news as well as military secrets gathered by Axis spies, can be transmitted to Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo in this fashion. Any indiscreet news item appearing in the press anywhere in North and South America can be forwarded through Buenos Aires to where it will do the Allied cause the most harm.

That the Axis fifth columnists have a well-organized communications system on the continent itself is not a myth. The United States Government knows of the existence of the clandestine radio stations. Recently the Nazi Embassy in Buenos Aires was caught sending a new high-powered short-wave transmitting apparatus to Chile. The German diplomatic pouch on the Santiago-bound Pan American plane looked overbulky. The bag was legally opened and the transmitter was discovered. But how many radio sets did the German-operated Condor lines carry to scattered points in South America before the lines were grounded?

One of the war's major paradoxes involves the communications systems that enable the Axis and pro-Axis diplomats in Buenos Aires to keep in touch with their bosses in Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo, or with Madrid, Vichy, Stockholm, Geneva, and a score of other points from which messages can be relayed to the Axis High Command. The ownership of most of the cable and wireless companies operating out of Buenos Aires is preponderantly American and British.

The All America Cables and Radio, Inc., a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph, is 100 per cent American. It provides cable, wireless, and radio-telephone service with all foreign points. As a public utility it cannot, under Argentine law, refuse to give the German Embassy in Buenos Aires a connection with the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin.

The Western Telegraph Company is all British. It provides

communications with Europe and the Orient. It is legally on the spot in the same sense as All America Cables and Radio, Inc.

Italcable and Italradio operated out of Buenos Aires until Italy entered the war. Then the Italian cable was cut, but Italradio is still working. It carries some Italian and Spanish traffic.

Communications experts admit that it is entirely possible for Nazi-Fascist operatives to make direct contact with submarines or Axis warships from clandestine stations operating on Argentine soil. Two such stations have been located and smashed up, thanks to the Taborda Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. But, radio and telephone men argue, if the Argentines have been able to locate two stations with their poor finder equipment, there must certainly be others.

The fifth column itself draws its strength from the foreign-born who reside in Argentina. There hasn't been an official census in the country for years, but a survey made on November 6, 1941, gave the nation's population as 13,518,239.

The foreign-born, excluding first- and second-generation citizens born in Argentina, who are largely anti-Fascist and anti-Franco Italians and Spaniards, included 80,000 Spaniards, 780,000 Italians, and 850,000 "others." There are few Japs in Argentina.

Funds for the activities of the German fifth column, the strongest and best organized, are levied from the thousands of German nationals or descendants of Germans who are in business in the country. An estimate of how well provided with money the Germans are can be obtained from the following data: From 1932 to 1939, or in about seven years, the German Embassy in Buenos Aires spent an average of \$225,000 a year. In the year ending June 30, 1940, however, the German Embassy disbursed \$784,000, and in the year ending June 30, 1941, it paid out \$1,930,000. These figures have been reconstructed by the Taborda Committee from known with-

drawals from local banks. Hidden cash outlays made directly to agents, propagandists, saboteurs, and associated craftsmen must bring the totals up considerably.

The Wintershilfe, the German Winter Help organization, alone raised enormous quantities of money for fifth-column work. The contributions levied upon German descendants and nationals varied from 4 per cent to 32 per cent of the individual's income. Wintershilfe produced \$287,000 in the year 1939-40 and \$334,000 the following year. These funds were paid into the Nazi Embassy's Chamber of Commerce.

Investigating the accounts of German banks in Buenos Aires, Radical Damonte Taborda found innumerable "bearer checks" issued by the German Embassy. Amounts paid out varied from \$250 to \$5,000. Most of these were outright bribes. A check drawn "to bearer" in Argentina requires no endorsement.

German fifth columnism in Argentina dates from the moment the Nazis came into power in Berlin. There were already thousands of German settlers in the country. When Adolf Hitler took over, the Germans in Argentine business firms, those employed in important chemical firms, in the building trades, the wool industry, and the old businesses, who wouldn't follow the Nazi party line, were promptly fired. Almost all of them, however, fell into step with the Brown Shirts. Relatives at home were held as hostages in a pattern of things that's now as familiar as that of the panzer blitz.

The National Socialist Democrat Argentine Party and the Labor Front were duly organized. Both were dissolved on May 15, 1939, following a national scandal over the discovery of plans to seize Patagonia, but the Taborda Committee a few months ago proved that the Nazis were still doing business at the old stands with new names. The NSDAP became the Association of German Benevolent and Cultural Societies, and the Labor Front became the Federation of German Trades Unions.

In the "Benevolent" association the strong-arm boys are organized into cells, or Stutzpunks, of ten members each. Every square mile of Argentina is divided into blocks, districts, and zones, under their respective Kreisleiters, Landeskreisleiters, and Landesgruppenleiters. The officers for these shock troops are regular SS and SA men. Until May 15, 1939, they drilled, practiced shooting with rifles, and did their calisthenics in uniforms. Now they drill, shoot, and do their exercises without uniforms.

That the German fifth column has more than "cultural" or "benevolent" intentions regarding Argentina and, therefore, the Western Hemisphere, can be deduced from the fact that Buenos Aires and its environs have been divided into nine zones with a Landesgruppenleiter over each.

American and British oil companies and other firms have cleaned out all German, Italian, Spanish, and pro-Fascist personnel. But the Argentine national oil monopoly, the YPF, is jammed with Germans. One German employee was caught making detailed drawings of a refinery on the Argentine coast, although he held only a minor job as valve-turner or oiler in one of the plants.

American oilmen are confident that Berlin possesses complete blueprints of every oil refinery, storage depot, power plant, railroad, and key industrial plant in Argentina. In recent years German nationals have completely taken over the chemical industries, the metal trades, engineering, and drafting. For the past ten years there has been a continual flow of German technicians into Argentina. Their supremacy in these fields might have been accidental, but there is a preponderance of evidence that it was planned and political.

The two electric-power plants that furnish Buenos Aires with power and light are owned by Belgian, Spanish, and Swiss capital. One plant is 100 per cent Italian. In the provinces the fifth column is almost as strong as in urban centers. German "rowing clubs" line the headwaters of Argentina's

rivers. The Argentine province of Misiones, bordering on Bolivia and Paraguay, across the frontiers of which a contraband arms traffic flourishes, is practically a German colony.

Buenos Aires, however, remains the capital of Nazi espionage and potential sabotage. The Axis Agents' GHQ is the German Embassy. This is equipped with a staff of one hundred and fifty diplomats, counselors, military and naval and air attachés, consuls, and commercial attachés, despite the fact that German trade with Argentina has been reduced to zero. Berlin's affairs in Buenos Aires could be handled by ten men.

The Nazi rendezvous is a comfortable, modern hotel near the German Embassy. That's where Herr Walter Giese, Gestapo big shot, landed when he was tossed out of Venezuela.

Herr Giese's trail was picked up by loyal Venezuelan, Brazilian, Bolivian, Paraguayan, and Uruguayan police as he made his way to Argentina. When he arrived, the American Embassy requested the Argentine Government to arrest and deport him. Nothing was done. Finally, under much pressure from Washington, Buenos Aires police inched up on Herr Giese, but he had disappeared.

He was located in a hospital, where he had been admitted on presentation of a doctor's certificate to the effect that he was a very sick man. Had Argentine police taken the trouble, they would have noticed that Herr Giese's document was signed by a German physician who was, of all things, a *gynecologist!* Giese entertained in his hospital suite for about a week, receiving many guests and giving and taking orders. Then he disappeared permanently.

Herr Giese is one of at least twenty Nazi agents operating in Buenos Aires. Their names and case histories are known to the American Government, which has communicated its information to the Argentine police and the Foreign Office. But nothing has been done about these men despite the Pan-American wartime agreement that the movements of spies and agents must be mutually reported and the persons ar-

rested, detained, or deported. At least two hundred known agents have applied for visitors' or permanent visas at the Argentine Foreign Office since the other Latin-American nations put the squeeze on enemy agents. They're all filtering down now into Argentina and Chile, but mostly into Argentina, where they can be sure of continued hospitality. It is possible that Chile will break relations with the Axis one of these days.

How many enemy agents enter Argentina by steamer from Europe, or across Argentina's unguarded frontiers, isn't known. They come with false passports and faked documents, and disappear into the interior. Usually they speak flawless Spanish.

One of the chief sources of worry to American and British military people, as well as to diplomats, is the steamship line owned by Franco Fascists who confiscated it from the Republic pre-Spanish Civil War owners. This line constitutes a direct Axis pipe line between Berlin and Buenos Aires. From one of its ships at Trinidad British authorities arrested the notorious Leon Hirsch, agent of Otto Abetz, with six or seven other agents. Now the Buenos Aires-to-Spain ships no longer stop at Trinidad or any other ports where they might meet with difficulties. It was on this line that the German Ambassador to Argentina, Edmund von Thermann, returned to Germany.

British and American policy toward Madrid is kid-gloved. Spanish ships on the high seas are not annoyed. In Washington it is still hoped that Fascist General Franco, Premier of Spain, will not turn his country, army, navy, and ships over to Germany to be used against the Allies. That's why Spanish ships safely sail out of New York with oil and from Buenos Aires with food, despite the lack of positive proof that supplies they carry don't reach Axis countries. Wheat and meat can take the same route to Berlin that Ambassador von Thermann took.

An integral part of Axis fifth columnism in Argentina is the Nazi-controlled press. The bellwether of Nazism is

El Pampero, printed in Spanish, edited by Enrique Osès. This newspaper had a circulation of from 75,000 to 100,000, or from one third to one half of the distribution of pro-Democratic *La Prensa*, and about equal to that of genuinely Argentine newspapers such as *El Mundo*, *Crítica*, or *La Nación*. Latterly, *El Pampero*'s sales have dropped enormously.

El Pampero is brilliantly edited, well written. It persistently plugs the Axis party line, which is anti-American and anti-British, of course. It distorts Allied victories into defeats and extols Axis losses into major triumphs. Editorially it preaches anti-Semitism and, when it isn't Red-baiting, it is screaming "Yanqui Imperialism" and proclaiming Argentina for the Argentines. The advertising department of *El Pampero* derives almost all of its income from Axis advertisers.

The German Transocean News Agency (an offshoot of DNB) Italian Stefani, and hopped-up "specials" from Berlin, Rome, Tokyo, and Madrid fill *El Pampero*'s columns. *La Prensa*, *El Mundo*, *Crítica*, and *La Nación* were lukewarm, almost taciturn, when Ruiz Guiñazú returned from the Rio conference after having knifed—with the aid of oily little Juan Bautista Rossetti—Sumner Welles' program for a *unanimous* break between Latin America and the Axis. *El Pampero* screamed: "Guíñazú Returns Victorious."

Proud and supercilious Argentines preened. There was a full-color Argentine flag waving literally and figuratively on *El Pampero*'s front page, along with an enormous picture of pince-nezed Ruiz Guiñazú. The fact that Ruiz Guiñazú's overloaded French Potez plane ran out of the runway in Rio and pancaked into the harbor was played down. Aranha quipped: "It wasn't the plane that was overloaded—it was Ruiz Guiñazú's conscience."

For a long time it was a mystery where *El Pampero* got its newsprint. American economic-warfare sleuths traced the source—a Canadian firm. The source has dried up on *El Pampero*, but the paper will keep going. It has about one year's

supply stored up. It bought it in driblets through straw men in Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay.

There are other pro-Axis, Nazi-manipulated newspapers in Argentina. The German-language *Deutsches La Plata Zeitung* plays the Axis game, but not too willingly. It's the newspaper of the old-timers who would be good Argentines instead of Germans if they had half the chance. The same is largely true of *Il Mattino d'Italia*, whose propagandizing is limited almost exclusively to unassimilated Italians. For the most part, the Italians become more Creole than the Creoles within six months of settling down in Argentina. However, there are plenty of Fascist die-hards among them, although their loyalties to the old country have been rudely shaken by the sorry figure Mussolini has cut in the war.

The government's pro-Axis policy and the fifth column combine to make Argentina a menace. The proportions of the latter are such that I have heard Allied diplomats and soldiers speak of it with something of the horror with which I heard wide-awake but helpless men speak of the situation that existed in Holland, Belgium, France, Greece, and Egypt.

But until all relations between Buenos Aires and Axis capitals are severed, Argentina remains the potential Norway of the South American continent.

CHAPTER VI

Nationalism—Root of Latin-American Discord

AFTER INVESTIGATING the more obvious reasons for Argentina's aloofness from war, I searched for what motivated its isolationism. I did not need to look very far. Behind Argentina's neutrality—a neutrality which is purely technical, confined to its government, and not universally shared by its people—I found an old enemy. I was introduced to this enemy in its more easily identifiable forms in Rome and Berlin. Perhaps I was naïve, but I did not expect to find it in Argentina.

Of the twenty-two nations in this half of the world, only two are isolationist. One of these, Chile, may yet enter the war on the side of the Allies, or she may come part way by divorcing the Axis. But Argentina doesn't believe in divorce. She'll stay tied to the Axis and call it neutrality, and she'll cling to that policy as long as it continues profitable and safe and otherwise expedient. That's the Argentine way.

You can lay this to the influence of Axis money and propaganda and the presence in Argentina of the most powerful fifth column in South America. You can attribute Argentina's neutrality to her blood bonds with Madrid and Rome. More than two thirds of Argentina's 13,000,000 people are of Italo-Spanish stock.

But the real reasons for Argentina's isolationism go beyond all the obvious ones to a cause as old as Argentina herself. The policy of neutrality proclaimed by the congenitally pro-Axis government of Conservative Ramón Castillo is rooted in na-

tionalism. Argentina hasn't a corner on this superpatriotic commodity. Nationalism flourishes in many South American countries.

In Argentina, however, you have the only country in this hemisphere where nationalism and the conditions that breed it and feed it exist simultaneously. It is the only South American country where it is almost impossible to distinguish nationalism from the politics of the party in power. Nationalists pack the cabinet, the civil service, the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, and the provincial and city administrations. Nationalists dominate the army, navy, and air forces.

Nowhere else on this continent is it as difficult to tell a Nationalist from a Nazi. Their opponents, the feeble Radicals, call them Nazinalistas instead of Nacionalistas. Not all of the Conservatives are Nationalists, but nearly all Nationalists are Conservatives, and unanimously the Nazis, Fascists, and Falangists who flourish in Argentina are Nationalists. They number approximately 250,000 and represent an enormous bloc in a country where the total vote cast at a national election seldom exceeds a million and a half.

The Nationalist party line is as familiar as a speech by Adolf Hitler, an oration by Benito Mussolini, or the editorials of Goebbels and Gayda. It preaches hatred of Americans and Britons. It advocates anti-Semitism and provokes persecution of Communists, and in Argentina, where social legislation is in the Middle Ages, anybody's a Communist who asks for a peso a week more than he's getting.

The Nationalists teach that Democracy is decadent and that government of and for and by the people is a perished political philosophy. Plank for plank, the platform of Argentine Nationalism is identical with those of Nazi-Socialism, Italian Fascism, and Spanish Falangism. It is complete down to advocacy of the Nazi-Fascist dogma of racial superiority. It is the boast of all Argentines, whether Nationalists or not, that they are the only uncontaminated race in the Western Hemisphere.

The pride and arrogance of the conquistadors flow in their veins.

Axis agents have stirred in the Argentines latent appetites for empire. "Our rightful place in the sun" has become the battle cry of the Nationalists of Argentina as it was the war theme of Italian Fascism and German Nazism. Their demands range from return of the British-held Falklands to more ambitious projects. Some demand the reconquest of those portions of neighboring countries which constituted the Argentina of more than a century ago when, however, she wasn't really Argentina but a Spanish vassal.

It is this Axis-inspired campaign for empire which, at this critical moment in the life of the Western Hemisphere, is the most dangerous of the Nationalist activities to (1) peace in Latin America, (2) hemisphere unity, (3) defense of the New World, and (4) the offensive Allied war effort. The Axis fifth column keeps it alive through newspapers like the Nazi-subsidized *Pampero*. At least twenty weeklies and monthlies supplement *El Pampero*'s work.

Experienced Allied military observers with whom I talked in Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, and Buenos Aires drew a blueprint of possible events in South America which challenge the High Command of the United Nations, but particularly the armed forces and the State Department of the United States. They reasoned that the Axis has not overlooked the opportunities that the situation in South America offers for destroying hemisphere unity and reducing Allied war power.

Deprived of quantities of rubber, tin, teak, bauxite, and of considerable oil by events in the Pacific and Asia, America and Great Britain need every pound of these raw materials which can be obtained from Latin America. It is part of the Axis strategy to deprive us of these commodities. British intelligence officers, schooled in Norway and Denmark, France and the Balkans, who've had about two years' or more advantage in observing the technique of Axis warfare, are particularly

concerned with the drift of events in Argentina and, less seriously, Chile.

They know that the Axis will, in the next few months, feel increasingly the pressure of Anglo-American offensive warfare from the west and south, and Russian attacks from the east. Therefore, they reason, the Axis will strike in South America where they have in the last six years carefully laid their plans for such a strategic assault.

In nearly every country in South America there have been and there are political "outs" who want to be "ins," jobless young intellectuals abubble with misguided patriotism who want to overthrow existing governments in favor of regimes which will guarantee them jobs. Everywhere there are third-rate Huey Longs and men of bad faith and persons who erroneously believe that Democracy can't work.

In such an atmosphere, similar to the situation which prevailed in Italy immediately before Fascism took over and in Germany before Nazism came to power, the Axis thrives. In Brazil where, in 1936 and 1937, Vargas began suppressing subversive agencies, the danger of Axis success has been reduced. But in Argentina the Axis reaches the apex of its power in South America.

It is strong, too, in Chile, but there the workers' parties, the Socialists and the Communists, allied with the Radicals in the Popular Front government of Juan Antonio Ríos, keep the Nationalist-Fascist followers of defeated presidential candidate General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo in check.

In Chile, when the showdown comes, there will be, as there were in England, miners and factory workers who will want to fight to keep the rights of free men they've won in years of struggle through their trade unions. They'll fight, too, if they receive any aid from outside. But in Argentina there is no organized citizenry to prevent the country from being handed over to the Nazis.

Only the middle-class businessmen who constitute the bulk

of the Radical opposition to Conservative Castillo's policies are willing to oppose the imminent Axis upsurge. Their leader is young Raul Damonte Taborda, but he, like the Liberals in Chile, can't fight alone. He hadn't even the full support of the late former president General Justo, spiritual leader of the Radical party.

I saw Justo in his villa at Mar del Plata, near Buenos Aires. Maybe he was playing doggo, but he gave me the impression of being a tired old warrior who had lived too softly to be willing to risk his skin in leading revolt against the Conservatives. Revolution or Allied intervention, Castillo opponents said, alone can save Argentina now.

Axis plans to throw South America into an organized chaos which would seriously affect—maybe the word is cripple—the Allied war effort are seen by English and American military men as a challenge to our State Department to put an economic hammer lock on Argentina. Because Argentina's exports have always profitably exceeded her imports, she has seldom known a depression, and it is likely that she can be brought into line with a complete embargo on automobiles, tires, manufactured goods, and gasoline.

Great Britain has already cracked down on Argentina. Despite Axis propaganda to the contrary, she sells little or nothing in Argentina and buys Argentina's beef largely because there's none available elsewhere.

I tracked down three stories of British competition with American firms in South America and found all three to be false. One concerned the sale of British-made airplanes in Brazil and Argentina. Another said that British machinery made with Lend-Lease materials was being marketed in Argentina. A third accused the British of whispering to Argentine merchants that they shouldn't forget that Argentina's real friends were the English and that the Americans were interlopers who wanted to grab the Argentine market for themselves. I talked with scores of American and British business-

men and none could produce proof of Anglo-American commercial competition in that country. There was such competition in the early stages of the war when it was still the phony war, before it became the people's war. That competition ended with Dunkirk.

Small British ships put into Buenos Aires once every four to six weeks. These occasional five- and six-thousand tonners couldn't possibly carry enough goods into that country to offer the United States anything like serious competition. But the anti-Allied propaganda persists despite the efforts of American Ambassador Norman Armour in Buenos Aires and British Ambassador Sir Noel Charles in Rio de Janeiro to kill it.

Both business and military men say that brutal as a policy of economic sanctions against the country may seem, it is the only language Argentines will understand at this point.

The hardships which sanctions would entail for hundreds of thousands of Argentine workers would bring pressure on the Castillo government and cause it either to modify its policy in respect to the Allies or to quit.

The editor of a leading afternoon newspaper in Buenos Aires told me that the Argentines buy newspapers only when the Allies are winning. Circulation falls off when the news is bad—i.e., when the Axis is winning. The editor interpreted this to mean that the average man is on our side. He, like Ambassador Armour and several prominent members of Castillo's government, also declared that only a hard-boiled cracking-down policy by the United States can prevent Argentina from going completely over to the Axis side.

They recognized that severe measures against Argentina might hasten the swing over to the enemy's side. But, they argued, what has the United States to lose? Delay in the application of economic sanctions against Argentina will only delay the inevitable date of a show of hands all around, and meanwhile Castillo will strengthen his position with the Axis and

with those people in Argentina who believe the Allies are fighting a losing war.

As was the case with Vichy France and Spain, the tendency of the State Department has been to “go slow” with Argentina in the vain hope of winning Castillo over. President Roosevelt, however, appears to recognize the urgency of the Argentine problem. Immediately after Argentina became one of the holdouts of the Rio de Janeiro conference he reportedly cabled Castillo that Argentina would receive Lend-Lease aid and the supplies of munitions and airplanes she demanded only when the needs of the Allies and loyal friends in South America had been filled. At the present rate of production and allocation, that means never. Castillo, nevertheless, went about Buenos Aires bragging he’d made Roosevelt knuckle down.

Whatever hopes the State Department might have entertained about the possibility of winning over Castillo must have received a rude wallop with recent completion of a Hispano-Argentine trade agreement calling for exchange of \$40,000,000 worth of Argentine food products for “Spanish-manufactured goods.”

In the first place, Spain is not a manufacturing nation. Secondly, her factories are still mere wrecks from the civil war. Her “manufactured goods” will very obviously come from Germany and Italy, and just as obviously the food Argentina sends to Spain will go largely to Germany and Italy. Italy is almost as close to starvation as are Poland and Greece.

The pact also called for establishment of a Madrid-to-Buenos Aires air line and the increase of shipping facilities between Argentine and Spanish ports. If these terms are fulfilled, existing channels for the transfer of Axis agents from Europe to this continent, the interchange of goods, the importation of weapons, and a general betterment of communications between the enemy and this hemisphere will be doubled or tripled. Proportionately, the dangers to Argentina, to the American continent, and to us will increase. And perhaps

some of that tungsten which Argentina produces and has promised us will find its way, along with nitrates from Chile, into the factories of the arms makers of the Axis.

Politically the Hispano-Argentine trade pact establishes at least one fact: Castillo is thinking in terms of making a deal with the Axis and not with the United Nations. He must be sure that the Axis will win the war. He has taken a step which will cause Nationalists and Conservatives to cheer. The Minister of War, the Minister of Marine, the Minister for Public Works, and the chief of police of Buenos Aires are all Nationalists. Here, perhaps, is the first concrete evidence of direct Nationalist influence in Argentine foreign relations. The negotiations began many months ago, which means that Castillo, despite occasional lip service to Pan-Americanism and *solidaridad* and to the memories of San Martín and Simon Bolivar, has had it in his heart and mind for a long time to do business with Hitler rather than with Roosevelt.

It doesn't occur to the Nationalist followers that they might be betraying their country by embarking upon an imperial adventure. I asked two representative Nationalists what they would do if it suddenly became clear to them that they were being used by the Axis to further the ends of Germany and Italy rather than those of Argentina. "Ah," they replied vaguely, "in that event we shall know how to die." Undoubtedly some few Nationalists are fervently, sincerely patriotic, but their leaders are not. They see in the present state of world affairs a wonderful opportunity for self-gain, power, and glory.

The trouble Argentina could cause in South America is considerable. Argentina has a good navy. It includes two battleships, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, sixteen destroyers, three submarines, ten mine sweepers, and four auxiliary vessels. Its army is the largest and best trained in South America and comprises 48,100 active troops with 281,000 trained reserves. The air force has 470 planes, about one hun-

dred of which are first-line light bombers of our Martin type. This might not seem like much of an army compared to the modern fighting machines of the Allies and the Axis today but against, say, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay it would have a power comparable to that which the Japs threw against Luzon.

Realistic observers are convinced that the Axis will instigate a Nationalist uprising in Argentina at the proper psychological moment. This moment, they believe, is rapidly approaching. The Axis isn't concerned with Argentina's imperial ambitions; it seeks only to set in motion the forces necessary to obstruct an effective Allied offensive.

The Axis has plenty of friends in the Nationalist movement. One of these is retired General Juan Bautista Molina. He's the granddaddy of the Nationalists. He's been a Conservative, a Radical, and is now a Conservative again. He heads the biggest Nationalist organization, the Alianza de la Juventud Nacionalista, and commands the biggest block of votes for Castillo in the Nationalist camp. Mesmerized by German military power and efficiency, he's a pro-Nazi. Comes *der Tag*, he'll be in there swinging. In 1940, when Argentina was popularly anti-German and pro-American, he gave a de-luxe luncheon party for German Ambassador von Thermann. At that particular time France had fallen and Britain appeared to be on the verge of collapse. Molina is a pleasant-looking man in his early sixties, with a genial smile, horn-rimmed eyeglasses, and a pair of cold, black, piercing eyes.

Another prominent Nationalist is General Domingo J. Martínez. He's young for a general, and ambitious. As a young officer he switched his loyalties from Radical President Hipólito Irigoyen to Conservative José Uriburu and then to the Liberal Radical General Justo. He advanced a grade with each switch. He dropped Justo for General Molina. He sees Molina aging and slipping from leadership. Martínez, a handsome man in an arrogant, pomaded way, hopes to pick it up.

Castillo recently appointed Martínez chief of police of the federal capital, which is more important than it sounds. More than 2,500,000 of Argentina's 13,000,000 live there.

A third top Nationalist is Manuel A. Fresco. He calls himself Adalid, meaning literally "wild tribal leader." He first commanded the attention of Axis scouts by organizing provincial employees of the province of Buenos Aires, while he was governor, into an imitation storm-trooper division. The boys paid for their uniforms out of their salaries, drilled in their spare time. Finally, he organized the PATRIA, one of the largest of the Nationalist groups. He's said to have a million-dollar war chest.

The smartest and reputedly the most dangerous of the Nationalists, however, is our old friend, Osès, of *El Pampero*. He calls himself El Primer Camarada, the First Comrade; but he's very definitely not the kind of Comrade who could get into the Kremlin. He began his Nationalist career as editor of a then-obscure little paper called *Crisol*, which is now one of the many Nationalist periodicals. Osès saw the profit possibilities of cashing in on Nazi penetration and organized *El Pampero* with some of his own and much of other people's money. The Taborda Committee says *El Pampero* cost the German Embassy about \$25,000 every month.

A prolific writer—emotional and obsessed with a martyr complex—Osès is the Nationalists' doctrinaire, the Goebbels or the Gayda of the movement. His books are Nationalist catechisms. He used to go to jail often for The Cause. Now they leave him alone, although Castillo, to keep up appearances, orders *El Pampero* closed now and then.

You can best judge the Argentine Nationalist movement not by the men who lead it today but by the man whose memory the Nazinalistas honor. He is Juan Manuel de Rosas, the first dictator of Argentina and one of the bloodiest dictators in history.

Rosas ruled for seventeen years. He organized his own

Gestapo, called the Mazorca, meaning “an ear of corn,” and symbolizing the tight, regimented unity of the regime. He exterminated every political opponent. In one mass execution alone he publicly had the throats of 1,500 men cut. In the years between 1835 and 1852 he killed 35,000 men and women who dared oppose him. To Argentine Nationalists he symbolizes the power and greatness of Argentina. They clothe him with the romantic trappings of the Gaucho and the Strong Man. There hasn’t been a Strong Man in Argentina since Rosas.

But the Nationalists don’t tell the story of what happened to Rosas. The dictator—as all dictators inevitably must—came to a dishonorable end. In a book called *Facundo*, a documentation of the tortures and terrors of the Rosas regime, the Liberal Sarmiento crucified the great Gaucho. The book stirred longings for freedom in the hearts of men, and finally, in 1852, Rosas was overthrown by his neighbors and a cabal of generals who believed in Democracy. Rosas died in poverty in an English garret.

CHAPTER VII

Chile and Chaos to Come

WHEN WE OPENED the Panama Canal we brought economic suffering to Chile, cut it off from Europe, reduced its commerce, and obliged it to trade with the United States on our terms. This fact, with the remote *Baltimore* incident and bitterness against Yanqui imperialism, is the basis of Chilean resentment against us, and of Chilean isolationism. Chile is on the fence but leaning far over on the side of the United Nations and about to fall at any moment.

A few more United Nations victories in Africa and in the Pacific, a little more proof that the Democratic forces and not the Axis will win the war, and it is certain that Chile will take its place by the side of Brazil and the other South American nations in this global war.

I sat through an entire afternoon and most of an evening in the patio of a Santiago hotel surrounded by the reporters, editors, and political writers of Chile's great newspapers. Together we examined the reasons for Chilean isolationism. Present were Communists, Socialists, Radicals, Conservatives, Fascists, and plain pro-Nazis bought by Axis funds. Of the more than twenty men and two women present at this extraordinary brain-picking session, almost all were on our side. The views of some ranged from deep conviction that Chile should remain neutral to advocacy of a policy of frank co-operation with the Axis. Some were anti-American, anti-British, and

cynical to a degree about Anglo-American war aims. But nearly all were intensely Republican and Democratic in outlook. Even the easily identifiable Nazi stooges did not dare, in the presence of their colleagues, to disavow Republicanism. And to a man, the newspapermen admitted that the principal causes of antagonism toward Tio Sam were the forgotten *Baltimore* incident and the business of the Panama Canal. Yankee exploitation of Chilean miners and workers also was mentioned, but in the end it developed that the complaints were chiefly emotional and concerned violations of Chilean pride.

In those hours spent in conversation with intelligent Chilean journalists I learned more, by the way, about Chile than I have learned about other countries from our diplomats and consuls. I recall that our Ambassador to Santiago, who has never bothered to learn Spanish, although he was for some years Ambassador to Madrid before going to Chile, wasn't in the capital when I was there. I mentioned this to one of the Chileans. He replied with considerable scorn that the American Ambassador was more interested in writing historical biographies (of American politicians) than he was in Chilean politics. Our Ambassador to Santiago, I was told, seldom called at the Foreign Office or on the President. He was absent at a critical moment in Chilean-American relations, a few weeks after the Rio conference, when it seemed by the very nature of things that the American Ambassador should have remained in Santiago to exert every atom of influence on our behalf. But Ambassador Claude Bowers, a fine gentleman, a student and writer, ex-Hearst newspaperman and lover of comfortable slippers, is not exactly a Norman Armour or a John Winant. He doesn't want to change his own comfortable way of life, much less exert himself in the interest of changing the shape of the life of the world, no matter how beneficial to the common good of mankind such changes might be. If it is true, as Chileans claim, that America doesn't

understand Chile, it must be attributed partially to the ineffectiveness of our diplomatic representation in Santiago.

I was amazed by my Chilean colleagues' knowledge of American history and current affairs. They were thoroughly conversant with the New Deal and could criticize some of its works as astutely as a skilled Yankee Republican politician. I was both amazed and ashamed. I knew little or nothing of Chilean history, a fault, I daresay, common not only among American newspapermen, but among Americans generally. My lack of information about modern Chile caused me deep embarrassment, particularly when I tried to defend our Latin-American policy and our war aims. When I sought to emphasize the reasons why Chile and the United States should be friends and why Chile should abandon neutrality in our favor, one of my colleagues immediately brought up the *Baltimore* incident.

"What was that?" I asked.

Then he told me the story. In 1891 the *Baltimore*, an American ship, sailed into the harbor of Valparaiso. Drunken seamen from the *Baltimore* brawled with Chilean sailors ashore. Two Chileans were killed and several wounded. Washington demanded an official apology and reparations. Chile submitted.

Up to that point the story was true. I checked it later. But my highly indignant informant added details which were not true. He said that we obliged the Chileans to salute the American flag as part of the "punishment." What actually happened was that an American warship, making a courtesy visit to Chile later, received the formal salute of a Chilean warship which greeted our vessel in harbor. This, however, has been interpreted by the extremists among the Yanqui-haters as an action we forced upon Chile. Naziphile newspapers have for the past several years kept the odious myth alive by "reprinting" extracts from newspapers of the time of the incident—with elaborations.

But an older cause of Chilean-American antagonism is the

Panama Canal. Until this waterway was opened, Chilean ships carried the coast trade up to western United States ports and to eastern South and North American ports and Europe around Cape Horn. Chile built up a sizable merchant fleet and occupied a profitable place in world trade, for it had copper and nitrates to sell, and in the latter commodity had acquired almost a monopoly. Southern Chilean ports, once stopovers for ships from Europe and America bound for west-coast South American ports and for distant Pacific points, are dead ports now, half deserted and impoverished.

Exploitation of Chilean workers by American interests who own and operate the copper mines is another source of conflict and, therefore, of Chilean resistance to American leadership. I will not here reproduce the mass of information which my well-informed friends poured out to me on this subject because I was not able to travel to the mines to see for myself the evils they described. But what they said was bad, very bad. They told stories of lockouts and company police and starvation wages which bore out the rather general contention that American Big Business has been interested only in what it could extract from our Latin-American neighbors rather than in what it could do to help them to a better life.

For the reasons I've outlined above, it was difficult to make my Chilean friends see that neutrality for their country would mean eventual disaster. It was impossible to convince them that we were fighting to create a universally Democratic world or, at least, a world wherein free peoples would determine how and by whom they should be ruled. They challenged our profession of Democracy, questioned whether we really knew what Democracy meant in view of our failure to solve our peacetime unemployment problems and to eliminate racial hatreds. When I insisted that we believed in racial equality they were quick to remind me that we still lynched Negroes and excluded Jews from our so-called "better clubs."

The re-election for a third term of Franklin D. Roosevelt

was also used by my Chilean critics as proof of their contention that we were drifting further from Democracy with each passing year. If, they reasoned, we had found it necessary to retain a President for a third consecutive term, was it not possible that we might abandon the electoral system completely? It was with great difficulty that I explained the issues involved in the third election of F.D.R. I was able, however, to employ this very objection to prove our determination to free Europe and Asia of Hitlerian and Japanese domination. The sun had set, and it was chilly in the patio by the time I had finished. I had to go through Rooseveltian foreign policy from the Chicago quarantine speech to revocation of the Neutrality Act before I made my point.

All of which ought to prove, at least, that Chileans are not political illiterates. And it ought to help us to understand Chile's long reluctance in breaking with the Axis. Among other things Chile feared, I found, was exposing its twenty-eight-hundred-mile coast to Japanese attack. The nation's copper mines and nitrate industries, its major ports and towns, lie on that coast. You can see them as you fly along the coast's brown bleakness northward from Santiago to Lima. A few Japanese gunboats could wipe out factories, mine installations, power plants, and entire towns. Naturally, before entering the war against the Axis, Chile wants copper-riveted, steel-lined guarantees of protection against physical attack and will undoubtedly delay a break with the Unholy Three until such guarantees are made.

Chile, unlike Argentina, almost implores sympathetic consideration. Its very poverty is moving. You leave the lush plains of Argentina and cross the Andes and you have progressed from wealth to poverty geographically and physically. The people are poorly dressed. There is an air of stubborn sadness about them which is repeated in the very aspect of the cities' buildings. Chile imparts to you a sense of a tragic past and a very uncertain present.

You feel the deep sadness of Chile in its music, which is more like the Spanish *gitano's* flamenco than the happier rumba, samba, or tango you usually encounter south of the border. Chile possesses the palpably sorrowful qualities of Mexico and Spain whereas Argentina and Brazil are happy lands, like prewar Italy or France.

The sad quality of Chile's life stems from the brutality of the country's soil. Although in area Chile equals Germany and England combined, less than 10 per cent is arable, the remainder being at best poor pasture land and at worst a desert of rock and snow-tipped peaks. Less than one hundred miles wide for most of its great length, Chile is bounded on the west by the sea and on the east by the incredible Andes—a land where the people's constant struggle for survival has made them undemonstrative and almost sullen. They resemble Balkan peoples in their attachment to their unyielding acres, and, like the Balkanites, are fatalistic, unimaginative, and as honest and suspicious as they are unambitious.

Volcanoes have contributed to their calm acceptance of "things as they are and things as they come." Every Chilean knows earthquakes. There is hardly a Chilean alive who has not lost relatives or friends in the periodic upheavals which demolish his villages and bring the mountains down upon him. And he cannot strike back. He is bitter, but he doesn't know exactly what he's bitter about—a state of mind which assists the propagandist enormously in directing hatred against the Yanqui.

Despite this, however, the Nazi propagandists have been less successful in Chile than in Argentina. This is due largely to the innate ruggedness of the Chilean and to his instinctive Republicanism and love of freedom. Unlike the army leaders of Argentina, those of Chile are Democratic. Among even the Conservatives we have friends. These admit that, despite the evils of our economic imperialism, American capital has helped to develop the land's mineral resources. Former Conservative

party President Rafael Gumucio is an example. He resigned from the party in protest against its advocacy of isolationism. Senator Eduardo Cruz Coke is another supporter of the United States. Still another is Marcial Mora Miranda, leader of the Radical party which is now in power.

Our sins have not been so great in Chile that we do not have some support among the workers. Their hero, Oscar Schnake Vergara, Socialist leader, has been advocating an immediate and complete break with the Axis since Pearl Harbor. He is now Minister of Production. Schnake might have been President instead of the less vigorous Radical Juan Antonio Rios, had he not been damned with the tag of Socialist.

A Chilean Radical is about as "radical" as a Willkie Republican. A Chilean "Communist" is roughly equal to a Willkie Republican. A Chilean "Socialist" is roughly equal to a Roosevelt Democrat. A "Conservative" may be an endemic Fascist. Yet these nuances are not apparent to our State Department. Certainly they are not clear to our Embassy in Santiago where a pro-American journalist was refused a visa to visit the United States recently because he said his party affiliation was "Communist," whereas a pro-Nazi newspaperman who gave his party as "Conservative" was quickly granted permission to visit our country.

The population of Chile is 5,000,782. It is uniformly European—a substantial stock of Spanish origin liberally mixed with Scotch-Irish and German blood. There is almost no Italian influence and little French. It is as uniformly Catholic as it is European—an important political factor, as we shall see later.

In this small population there is a large island of pure-bred Germans numbering about 30,000, and all Nazis. An additional 50,000 or 60,000 Chileans of German stock are largely pro-Nazi. In some Chilean cities in the southern lake region, German is the common language in homes and offices, newspapers and shops. Germans or Chileans of German origin control the wool industry, agriculture, and the commercial

life of southern Chile. In this region the Germans are the white sahibs of German imperialism, and the Chileans of Latin origin are their untouchables.

From southern Chile derives most or all of the actual Nazi influence in the country. Here the funds are raised to buy journalists and influence politicians. Berlin needn't send a single mark to Chile—or Argentina—to keep the fifth column going. Levies are regularly made by the German Embassy in Santiago on all German nationals or Chileans who have relatives in the Reich.

The years of Nazi efforts in Chile were rewarded in May 1941, and later in August and September, when the new Chilean Congress refused to pass legislation outlawing Nazism and Fascism. Such legislation would have killed the Popular Socialist Vanguard party, formerly the Nazi party of Chile, principal political troublemaker in the nation. This party had succeeded in sending two deputies to the Chamber, one of whom, Jorge Gonzalez von Marees, was its leader. Just before the newly elected Congress was seated in May of last year the Vanguardistas mobbed a convention of the Liberal Radical party, killed one delegate, and wounded others.

The new Congress, however, despite Nazi needling, voted down efforts to expel the seventeen Communist deputies and the four Communist senators chosen in the spring elections of 1941. The Socialists and the Communists formed the strongest single political force in the country and the most clearly pro-American element by settling their long-standing differences. These, like the quarrels which separate Republicans and Democrats, Radicals and Conservatives, Tories and Laborites everywhere, contributed to the inevitable chaos of Chilean self-government. It is out of such chaos of discussion, argument, recrimination, and eventual compromise that Democracy is achieved in Chile and everywhere else. Those who are hypercritical of Chilean tardiness in joining the United Nations in the war against the Axis ought to remem-

ber that out of similar chaos came our own decision to aid Britain in its war against Germany—a decision which inevitably brought us into the war.

If the pressures within our own United States against our participation in the World War were great, they were proportionately greater in smaller Chile. With a population of little more than five millions it had a disproportionately higher number of undigested German nationals. Unlike ourselves, Chileans could not easily dispense with the markets of Axis and Axis-controlled nations. War, to Chile, didn't mean doing without sugar and coffee and the luxuries of life, but doing without coal, gasoline, machinery, textiles, and a thousand vital items essential to the maintenance of its precarious economy. To a certain extent this was also true of Argentina, but with one enormous difference. In Argentina, agrarian land of beef and maté, blessed with an equable climate, people almost *couldn't* starve. In quasi-industrial Chile, plagued with a bitter land and largely unfavorable climate, people *could* starve.

The Germans applied pressure on Chile from outside as well as from within. After the Vanguardistas' failure to obtain wide political support Berlin tried to bribe the country with the training ship *Priwall*. This vessel had been tied up in Valparaiso harbor since the outbreak of war in 1939 and was worthless to the Germans. Chile accepted the gift. Berlin was rewarded with the escape of five German freighters from Chilean ports where they'd been interned. The Nazis tried to ride this wave of pro-Axis sentiment, but their plans for a *putsch* were discovered. The Socialist-Communist element demanded and obtained an investigation of Nazi activities. This disclosed the existence in the country of military and semi-military enemy "cells" and the membership in Naziphile organizations of at least 200,000 persons with approximately 20,000 furnishing funds for the movement.

A series of repressive measures against Axis elements was undertaken. The true spirit of the people of Chile began to emerge from the confusion. This assertion of Democratic reaction against Nazism and its supporters culminated in Chile's request to the Pan American Union for a consultative conference of foreign ministers to determine the position of the Americas in the new situation created by Japan's attack on December 7, 1941. This act alone, if no others are considered, must count heavily in Chile's favor. It demonstrated that, underlying a superstructure of bad faith and political bargaining, there has always been a fundamental basis of Democratic loyalty.

This fidelity, however, has been under constant attack from the pro-Nazi elements and from two other sides. The first enemy of Chilean Democracy remains ostensibly the hired and converted stooges of Berlin. A second is Nationalism, which is a centrifugal force urging Chile away from internationalism and from such collaboration as would aid in attaining what should be the objective of a people's war—universal political self-determinism as a basis for a wider application of social democracy.

Chile's third enemy is one which few dare to recognize and fewer still hazard to identify in print. Writers of newspaper and magazine articles cannot associate the Catholic Church with the forces of reaction in Chile and wherever it is an "official" religion. The reasons for this temerity are obvious. Fortunately, however, the writer of a book is not under the constraints imposed on newspaper and magazine writers. There are no advertisers in a book!

Everywhere in South America the Catholic Church is the ally of Nationalism, the mouthpiece of Latinity, the immovable force which eschews change and urges allegiance to outworn traditions. This is *not* true of the Catholic Church as a whole. On the contrary, everywhere in South America, as in

Spain, France, and Italy, there are simple village padres who fight the people's struggle. Some young priests are aware of the universal need for social, political, and economic reform. But too many, consciously or not, are the intellectual and spiritual allies of the Axis, often unaware of the odious role they are playing. Some, of course, like our own Father Coughlin, are not so innocent.

In our own country, reactionaries may be of many faiths. But it so happens that in those countries where Catholicism is the state religion, the ultra-Conservatives are Catholics, if they have any religion at all.

It may or may not be an accident that a map of Axis or pro-Axis nations or of nations where the Axis had easy military success in Europe is a map chiefly of Catholic countries. Why is this so? Is it not at least partially because these countries spiritually made common cause against that common bugaboo Communism?

Catholicism's alliance with Nazi Fascism is indirect, subtle, difficult to isolate, and, in many cases, purely circumstantial. But it is nonetheless a factor in international relations, particularly in *our* relation to the nations south of the Rio Grande. And this factor may become an exceedingly important one in the shape of the imminent peace.

In Chile, as in Argentina, certain elements in the Church fear that a United Nations victory, won very largely with Russian blood and therefore with blood redder than red, may result in a Sovietized peace. They have been working against hemisphere homogeneity, and in these two countries the Church is more powerful than elsewhere in South America.

Politically the United States has overlooked the tremendous influence of the Church in the state affairs of South American nations. We separate Church from State. And we committed the gross error of dealing with South American countries on that basis with the result that insofar as the Church is a political force, it has been a weapon in the enemy's hands rather

than in ours. The enemy made no Church and State distinctions, but recognized the power of the Church wherever convenient.

Those who wonder why Hitler hesitated to invade Spain need not look beyond his necessity for keeping the good will of those countries where Spain has embassies. Hitler will invade Spain if and when military exigencies outweigh his need for holding onto the friendship of nations where Spanish ambassadors, ministers, and consuls are located. Only when those exigencies become overwhelming will Hitler sever the pipe lines of information and espionage and propaganda which the Spanish-Fascist representatives afford. Just as Spanish ships carry spies to and from the New World, so do Spanish diplomatic agencies serve as the transmission media for anti-Democratic propaganda.

The links between Spain and virtually every nation in South America are those of blood, religion, and language. Those between Spain and the Axis are the links connecting Madrid spiritually with Rome and politically with both Rome and Berlin. These latter were forged in the fires of the Spanish civil war, which was a Fascist-Catholic revolution against what it conveniently construed to be Communism.

Catholics will rise as a man to deny that their Church is in league with the forces of international Fascism which Hitler represents as truly as do Mussolini and Franco. But no Catholic can deny that the Spanish equivalent of Fascism, the Falange, has the full support of the Catholic Church. They can no more deny this than they can refute Catholicism's opposition to Communism or to any radical social reform which would reduce the Church's power in countries like Spain, Argentina, or Chile, to name the more obvious ones. And it is through the Falange and the Falange's diplomatic representatives overseas that the Axis feeds into the Western Hemisphere the poisons of disunity.

The Falange preaches loyalty to Spain and to Spanish tra-

ditions. It employs a common language and makes the most of a common racial and religious heritage. It has made powerful friends of the rich, conservative land- and mill-owning classes in Chile and in Argentina. Through the Falange, Berlin has hired South American journalists and bought Chilean and Argentine newspapers. Our counter-propaganda, failing to recognize the role the Church has played in this devious game, has been feeble and ineffective.

Our worst enemy in the southern continent, next to the profiteering exploiter of South American workers, has been Hollywood. Operating apparently on the theory that they were sending to South America what "those Latins" wanted, our bright Hollywoodians have been shipping down the most unrepresentative possible films, depicting us as a nation of gangsters, assassins, and silly cowboys, of adulterers and profiteers, or as members of a superficial night-clubby civilization reflecting that very decadence which Hitler attributes to us. Prelates have repeatedly used these films in Chile and Argentina to prove that Americans are an ungodly lot and therefore unworthy of the friendship and loyalty of Chileans and Argentines. Invariably the weaknesses of our national life I heard criticized in both countries were the weaknesses portrayed by our own films and newsreels. When we were trying desperately to prove to our neighbors in South America that we were working hard to make the weapons which would win the war, our newsreels showed Chileans and Argentines shots of surfing Floridians in scanty bathing suits and of cowboys riding Brahma bulls. Meanwhile the Germans were showing pictures like *Victory in the West* and mightily impressing South Americans with the power of Nazi arms.

An accounting for Chileans and Argentines is inevitable. It is clear even now, through the fog of the chaos Democracy generates as it progresses one small step at a time toward the unreachable millennium, that the United Nations and not the

Axis will win the war. A victory for the Axis alone can save the comfortable Conservatives of Argentina and Chile, for they have made their peace with the Axis and can expect favorable treatment. But an Axis victory is no longer probable or even possible. Because Chileans are more shrewd and more ruggedly realistic than their romantic and quixotic neighbors across the Andes they may still save themselves by becoming part of the great current which is sweeping the world toward new horizons. For Argentina there's less hope.

In both cases there are elements of more chaos to come. In an Axis victory in Europe and consequent danger to this hemisphere there are enough decent Chileans and Argentines left to solidify a revolution against those few at the top who refuse to see the danger. The possibility of such a victory is so remote, however, that it is futile to discuss it.

On the other hand, the probability of a United Nations victory is so definite, so actual, that it is intelligent to examine the position of Chile and Argentina only on such a basis. What would happen in Chile? The Conservatives who have preached a policy of friendliness with the Axis will be turned out of office by those who have consistently opposed such a policy. And these are the Socialist-Communist-Radical elements whose impatience with clericalism and capitalism is rapidly approaching an intensity comparable to that of those who in Russia some twenty-five years ago turned on the czars. This palpable impatience is so well known to the current politicians in power in Chile, however, that I wager they will turn this force into their—and our—favor before it is too late.

This may also happen in Argentina, but I doubt it. There, as has been true in every nation where the social and economic distance between the common people and their rulers has become too great, there may be only one solution left—revolution.

Whatever happens will affect us, and the objectives for which we fight will or will not be reached in the proportion

that the problems of Argentina and Chile are or are not solved. For Chile and Argentina are part of the American concept, a concept as old as Bolivar and yet as new as the Roosevelt Administration.

A tremendous responsibility rests with the United States. America must prove to all South America that our American dream means the end of an obsolete economic system which has taken much from nations like Chile and given little. South American jungles and deserts and mountains are lush with coffee, rubber, tanbark, oil, and minerals. *South Americans* should own these resources, not *North Americans*. It is absurd to argue that without American capital those resources could never have been developed and that, therefore, our friends should be everlasting grateful. We've "developed" those resources, but we've also siphoned off all of the profits obtained thereby. Thus the need for an import-export bank to finance every country south of the Rio Grande including Argentina. Big business makes the profits and the American taxpayer pays the losses.

The profits derived from our own particular brand of imperialism do not go into the pockets of American working men and women but into those of a few who own the shares representing the investment in foreign developments. The process is identical with the one which curses India, which yields a net income of \$400,000,000 a year to a select few absentee owners in the City of London.

Until such vicious economic practices are abolished we cannot honestly talk of a war for universal Democracy or freedom or for any of the principles we have proclaimed as the basis of a new and better life.

CHAPTER VIII

Sky Trucks and Politics

IN THE "OLD DAYS," which means before war came, anyone who traveled in South America was impressed with the efficiency of a private enterprise known as Pan American Airways. The line operated in Brazil as Panair do Brazil; in Argentina and the west coast, from Santiago northward, as Panagra or Pan American Grace.

Foreign air lines competed locally in most South American countries. The Germans ran an efficient service in Brazil. The Italians linked Brazil with Europe. But you hardly ever heard of them down there. Pan Am was *the* air line. Its big, shiny, all-metal Clipper ships, and later the huge, fast Stratoliners, awed South Americans and whoever else traveled on them. People in Belém, Rio, Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Lima almost literally set their watches by the arrival and departure of the planes, so close to schedule did they operate.

Accidents were almost unknown, so efficient was the ground service and so meticulous the maintenance of planes. The crews debarked and embarked with military precision, in neat blue uniforms. South Americans' respect for the Yanqui rose with the prestige of Pan American Airways.

It is difficult to imagine what might have been the state of our communications with South America had Juan Trippe not had the foresight and energy to plan and build the air line which brought Rio and Baires, Santiago and Lima to within

a few hours' flying time from New York, and the nether continent proportionately politically closer to Washington. Until the Clippers and Stratoliners, travel to South America was 100 per cent sea-borne, the fastest ships requiring three weeks from the capital of Argentina to New York and three or four weeks from Santiago de Chile to San Francisco.

Juan Trippe and his able deputies did more than anyone to turn South America's face from Rome and Berlin toward New York and Washington. Until the advent of the air line in a continent lacking railroads and roads, the nations of South America themselves hardly knew one another and much less knew or understood Uncle Sam except as a foolish old gentleman who was forever offering loans the South Americans could never repay.

Trippe's engineers, traffic agents, and pilots overcame incredible physical and political difficulties to build their air line. How they built airports and emergency landing fields in remote jungles and established radio stations and beacons in Andean eyries is one of the most romantic stories of American industry and enterprise. How Pan American's agents charmed away the prejudices and antagonisms of petty little politicians is part of that saga. It is one thoroughly exploited by the magazines and feature sections of the newspapers.

We are perhaps less conscious, however, of the fact that it was Pan American Airways which laid the groundwork for what was to come later—an aerial freight and passenger line from New York to Natal, across the South Atlantic to the west coast of Africa, thence to Khartoum, Cairo, and Jerusalem; to Bagdad, Teheran, and Moscow, Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta, and Chungking. *Over this route, precious bombers were transferred from our factories to the fronts in North Africa, Russia, India, and China.*

The physical obstacles which Pan American Airways engineers encountered in South America were multiplied tenfold in Africa. The political barriers were even greater. The British

Overseas Airways Corporation held a monopoly on African continental air-line communications. The concessions held by Air France, German Lufthansa, Italian Ala Littoria, and South African Airways were worthless now. The French, German, and Italian lines ceased operating. The South African line was practically a local setup. BOAC was big, powerful, and efficient. It desired to keep out foreign competition, particularly the rivalry of the able Americans. BOAC had an eye on postwar African air traffic.

Business, I have learned in my years of wandering from one war front to the other, is still business, and the crimes committed in the unspoken name of business in this war, as in the last, are sufficiently numerous to fill a shelfful of volumes as long as Dr. Eliot's renowned compendium. *Commercial* rivalry contributes to the chaos through which we must wade thigh deep before victory is ours.

Illustrative of this usually disavowed economic competition was what occurred when a Pan American Airways official sought the permission of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia to fly over his land. Tall, redhead, and able James Hopkins Smith, Jr., assistant manager of the newly formed PAA-Africa, Ltd., visited King Ibn Saud. Smith sought a short cut across Arabia to fly freight and bombers direct to India. He wanted to save two or three days and some 2,000 miles wasted in the run along which BOAC landing and fueling facilities existed prior to Pan Am's arrival in Africa.

Smith was provided with an interpreter, a British Army officer and member of the British Intelligence Service. Through the officer, Smith requested the permission of Saud, who speaks only Arabic. Saud's reply, as translated to Smith, was an elaborate but polite "No." Smith couldn't understand this. He had given his pledge that the planes would fly well to the south of sacred Mecca and otherwise avoid holy places. Smith knew American prestige was high in Arabia. It had been carefully built up by the Standard Oil Company of California

and the Texaco people. They had developed the oil-rich island of Bahrein and other Arabian deposits.

Smith went again to Saud, this time with an American interpreter. Saud greeted him cordially and expressed amazement when Smith reiterated his request for the right to fly over Arabia. Saud told Smith's interpreter that he had wondered why the Americans hadn't come in. He was, in fact, slightly offended, for his relations with the oilmen had been most cordial—as well as profitable. Smith returned to Cairo and within a few days had an air line running across Arabia.

At least one of the reasons why it was found necessary to militarize the PAA-Africa organization was due to pressure from BOAC. The British air line reasoned somewhat as follows:

The development of a civilian American air line in Africa might mean serious postwar competition. If, however, the line were owned and operated by the United States Government, it would be a relatively simple matter to eliminate it after the war in the general demobilization. United States Government insistence on maintaining an air line running from the Gold Coast across Africa and branching off to perhaps Istanbul and Moscow and Bagdad, Teheran, and Indian points, would be highly unlikely. A private company, however, after having invested enormous quantities of money and equipment, would probably be inclined to make a stiff fight for survival.

BOAC let Pan American know in a hundred little ways that the Americans were welcome enough to do the war job but that as private competitors they weren't welcome at all. There was personal antagonism between the personnel of the lines wherever they used airports or other facilities in common. Once, riding a BOAC plane, when we were obliged to come down for fuel at a Pan American airport in East-Central Africa, the Pan Am boys shooed us off to a near-by airport, causing us to go about one hundred miles out of our

way. Luckily we had sufficient gas and enough daylight left to make our destination. Had we failed, there might have been a major incident.

Arguments and difficulties about which of the two lines should carry mail over various legs of the African routes occurred with disconcerting frequency. Militarization of the Pan Am line removed the cause of these quarrels, at least temporarily. Militarization, however, was on the whole a very unfortunate business. I regret that the necessity for secrecy does not permit me to go into details.

That aspect of the operation of our African air-freight system, however, is secondary to what American ingenuity and scientific skill often accomplished in hours, where days or weeks would otherwise have been consumed. Communications offered numerous difficulties. The British and others never flew the jungles, mountains, and deserts of Africa at night. It was necessary to erect lighting equipment and radio stations at nearly a dozen points. All had to be done in a hurry. One man was given three weeks to put up a powerful radio station in Cairo for company communications. He would have been considered a superman had he finished his job in the allotted time. He had the station erected and working within nine *days*. One airport was completed in fifty days. Washington ordered the line into existence in December 1941, soon after Pearl Harbor. By the end of April it was operating full blast.

Malaria was the line's principal enemy. The Gold Coast, western anchorage of the zigzag course, was a renowned pest pot. Pan American engineers and medical officers approached it in this spirit: "This is malaria country—well, let's get rid of malaria." They drained, ditched, and screened. They obliged pilots, groundmen, and executives to wear long-sleeved shirts and long trousers after sundown. They ordered everyone to take five grains of quinine daily and, lest they forgot to take it, the pill was served daily with meals.

Dr. Lowell T. Coggesshall, of the University of Michigan Public Health School on leave of absence from the Rockefeller Foundation, was the man who proved that Africa could be as healthful as Florida. He wrote me recently to say that in September he had had but one case of malaria and only occasional recurrences since. This in a population of approximately 2,000 in a large but overcrowded camp. A year before, the rate was nearly 40 per cent. Dr. Coggesshall also practically stamped out dysentery.

Maiduguri, one of the stations on the line, was what he called a "hotbed" of malaria and dysentery. Proper messing, in addition to the anti-malarial measures, obliterated the diseases. There hasn't been a case of either since July 1. Modestly, Coggesshall says: "I believe the story that the lowlands of Africa are a white man's graveyard if one accepts disease as inevitable and does nothing about it, but it doesn't hold water if long-established preventive measures are aggressively applied."

Dr. Coggesshall was aggressive enough. Recently, experimenting with certain new drugs for the prevention of malaria in troops operating in lands where the usual mechanical means cannot be employed against the disease, he required a few human guinea pigs. His hospital was empty. He was obliged to borrow several Englishmen from the RAF hospital near by. The British are less vigorous in fighting malaria than in fighting the Axis. One Gold Coast camp has a constant 10 per cent incidence of active malaria, which means that out of every hundred able-bodied men ten are in hospital with the disease.

Night flying became almost standard practice on the American air line. The men I met all along the way seemed animated with but one thought—the efficient operation of "The Line." Once, when Cairo was threatened by the enemy, General Auchinleck desperately needed fuse caps for the shells used in his tank guns. There were some available on the Gold Coast.

American civilian commercial pilots flew them night and day from Accra to Cairo in just under twenty-one hours of flying interrupted only for fuel. The planes arrived in Cairo, by the way, only to find that the RAF officer in charge at the airport there had not expected the Americans "so soon" and hadn't any trucks ready to pick up the fuse caps and move them up to the front. The American pilots stormed and demanded they be allowed to fly their cargoes right up to the front. "Give me a map," one of them yelled, "and I'll find the nearest airfield to the front and fly the stuff up there myself." Postscript: the RAF officer was promptly fired when his more efficient superiors discovered his blunder.

Wendell Willkie's reference in a radio speech to the "trickle" of supplies ferried from South American bases to Africa and on to battlefields was unfortunate. In the month of September 1941, the air line flew 5,000,000,000 (five billion) pound miles, or the equivalent of 2,500,000 ton miles. September was a "bad" month. The Army was taking over. There was duplication of effort between Pan American personnel and Army people. But PAA-Africa's effort that month, despite a shortage of planes, was equal to having moved an entire division of 15,000 men with full equipment from Accra to Cairo. If you will glance at your atlas you will see that it was a major achievement for the sky trucks.

The planes used for the first air-freight line in the world were Douglas D-C 3s modified as bulk and troop carriers. Their story is as thrilling a one as the building of the air line itself. There seems to be no load too great, no weather too foul to ground these ships. Built originally as passenger air liners for use in the United States, the basic design was a composite of the requirements expressed by the leading commercial air lines. The plane has a relatively low wing load and every possible safety device including de-icers. Stripped of the twenty-odd comfortable seats, the D-C 3, as used in Africa, carries approximately 5,000 pounds of freight and

passengers. That's what each plane is supposed to carry. I've flown in one or two when the load was considerably greater. In Burma and Malaya the D-C 3s have been known to "walk off" with as many as sixty and even eighty men, women, and children refugees (with baggage) from landing fields unworthy of the name.

Pilots love those ships. Passengers hate them. You sit, now, not in a reclining chair stuffed with sponge rubber, but in a shallow aluminum pan hollowed the size of a parachute seat. The pans are in rows along either side of the fuselage. They probably aren't too bad for paratroopers in full rig sitting on the seats of their chutes. Those pans, though, are hell on the tender, unarmored bottoms of civilians or soldiers in light-weight tropical shorts. The veteran traveler on our sky trucks cannily chooses a pile of soft freight to lie on for most of the journey. Otherwise it is torture to sit for six or eight hours in one of those dishpans. You can't sit, you can't lie back. If you do you encounter the sharp edge of a rib or a strut of the bare fuselage. Cold? Yes, that too. Only the pilot, copilot, and radioman are comfortable. Now I carry an inflatable rubber pillow and, when weight allowance permits, a blanket roll containing an inflatable rubber mattress.

Generals, of course, do better. There is at least one ship, fully accoutered with Pullman berths for overnight travel, available to take brass hats from one point to another.

I have come into contact with many organizations, civilian and military, in the war years. Few have demonstrated the morale of the Pan American organization. A slur on PAA could earn you anything from a dirty look to a wallop on the jaw, depending on the seriousness of the offense. This morale was disintegrating rapidly during the autumn months the line was becoming de-Pan Americanized.

There were many reasons for this. With the Army in control there came the unavoidable overlapping of authority which is poison to the circulatory system of any big, complex

organism. The Army, expanding overnight, could not always easily choose the right man for the right job. To the credit of both the Army and PAA, however, the line kept planes in the air and kept freight moving.

Once, when a flight of bombers Cairo-bound for the Middle East front arrived at a certain field along the still-secret African route, the Army ground and service crew had gone. Three PAA men were on hand. They procured trucks, picked up the crews and carried them to the mess halls and barracks, arranged for the necessary checks of engines and equipment and for refueling. The PAA boys need not have performed these tasks. The Army had taken over. But they didn't stop to worry about jurisdiction. That banal "Keep 'Em Flying" means something to PAA men.

On another occasion a Pan Am executive who had been drafted into the Army with a major's commission was caught by a regular Army colonel up to his elbows in grease repairing an engine. The colonel dressed him down for doing the work himself instead of directing one of the sergeant mechanics to do it. The major told the colonel to go to hell—there was no trained mechanic about to repair the motor, and the bomber was badly needed farther north, at El Alamein.

Many of the old-timers who fly the PAA planes are former Navy fliers. Regular Army officers who took over jobs formerly held by PAA executives were inclined to remember Army-Navy rivalry. The civilians, however, didn't play that way. It was a motto of Pan Am men that "we can forget the Army-Navy game here, where we've got a job to do." Nevertheless there were personal rivalries and antagonisms.

Lack of planes and equipment also contributed to delays. I am not at liberty to tell you how many planes Pan Am operated during the month when, for example, the line pumped 2,500,000 miles' worth of parts and munitions and supplies into the Middle East and other distant battlefields.

I can tell you, however, that the number was so small as to make the record of mileage flown without accident and the quantity of material transferred something of a modern miracle.

The principal concern of the proud Pan American crews was that careful checks of motors and equipment would be omitted. This man Trippe appears to have inculcated in his staff a sense of responsibility to human life and to the planes which are the product of human labor. The spirit dominating the operation of this particular civilian air line isn't, of course, unique. I know it can be matched by Eastern Air Lines, United, and TWA, and by, in fact, any of our major commercial air lines. And this augurs well for the future of international commercial aviation after the war. Already new freight planes are being produced. It will not be surprising to find the airplane largely displacing the express steamer as a conveyer of high-cost goods, precious metals, gems, silks, spices, and drugs. That the airplane will be the principal means of passenger conveyance, I, for one, have no doubt. Only obstruction from the shipping combines or the creation of ships of great speed operating at lower rates than were extant on the luxury liners prior to the war can prevent the supremacy of the plane. In my limited imagination, however, I cannot conceive such ships. Vessels like the *Queen Mary*, *Normandie*, *Rex*, *Conte di Savoia*, and *Bremen* always operated at an enormous loss and were kept afloat only for reasons of prestige. Every cargo on a plane, however, can be made to pay. Businessmen being what they are, I am confident that air-freight and air-passenger travel will comprise one of the major fields for their ingenuity in the next very few years. Aviation will displace the movies as a major industry, and the representatives of our air industry will, I fervently hope, displace the celluloid heroes of Hollywood as our ambassadors abroad. I'd rather have a Juan Trippe represent America in, say, Bolivia, than a Clark Gable, lovable as the latter may be.

In the past three and one-half years I have flown approximately 300,000 miles on the commercial and military air lines of the United States and Britain. I believe I have earned the right to make the unqualified assertion that America's destiny is in the air, as Britain's once was on the seas.

I left New York on a Clipper about the middle of May 1942. I had grown restless after a few weeks at home.

Restlessness is an occupational disease of war reporters. I suffer from a chronic case. I love my wife, my children, our comfortable home. But I'm not a homebody. I like to keep moving. Ever since I felt for the first time the throb of a ship under my feet, nearly ten years ago, when Universal Service sent me to Spain, I haven't been able to remain long in any one place. Since then, ships, trains, airplanes, hotels, and restaurants have been my natural habitat.

A journey is invariably hateful to me while it lasts. I often detest the cities and towns I visit while I am there. As invariably, however, I become nostalgic about them in retrospect. When I see and smell the filth of India and witness the suffering of the people who live in it, I loathe it. When I'm home again and think back over the thousands of miles and retrace the long lines on the globe whereon I've marked the routes I've covered, I don't smell the stenches or see too clearly the hunger and the pain of the people of the many lands I've known.

I don't see the flies crawling unhindered on the trachomatic eyes of the babies of the Arab countries or the open, running syphilitic sores of natives in Africa, or the twisted, hideous bodies of lepers. I remember, instead:

Stately, lithe Indian women in diaphanous saris of delicate hues. Tall, handsome Sikhs in immaculate jodhpurs.

Little Kashmiri merchants with Levantine faces. The dark, green smell of the jungle. Starred desert skies and the desert's eloquent silence. Wind-blown palms waving unkempt heads.

I feel about travel much like women feel about childbirth: I quickly forget the pain.

My restlessness is partially due to an overwhelming curiosity about this war. After a few weeks of idleness the urge to be moving again to a new front or an old front to see what has happened there since I last saw it becomes unbearable. A reporter is busy only when he is covering a story. And on my return from South America in April I was more aware than ever of the enormity of the "story" that was breaking in Europe, in Africa, in Russia, India, and the Far East.

It was good to see the trees greening in Bronxville and to play with the kids and the pup and to see Carmen Amaja dance at Carnegie Hall. But I had to get back to the story. After days of wangling in Washington I obtained a place on a plane headed for Africa. For three days we backtracked some of the route I had just covered a few weeks before—New York to Miami to Natal and then, one morning, we headed east for a certain point on the west coast of the Dark Continent.

I find in my diary several disconnected references to the young men in khaki who were my fellow passengers. They wore regular officers' uniforms but without Army insignia. Over their left breast pockets was embroidered in blue the familiar Pan American Airways label with the inscription PAA-Africa. On their shoulders they wore gold emblems saying Africa-PAA. I was to find, later, that these emblems were intended to fill a definite function in British Africa, where rank means much. The metal insignia identified the wearers as "officers"; without these labels the boys couldn't frequent the better bars and restaurants.

Almost all the men had been checked out as transport pilots or navigators. All were phenomenally young, and I expected them to be excited about what lay ahead of them. A few were. A few were imaginative and sensed they were taking the Pan Am jobs to avoid conscription.

I'd traveled sufficiently in Africa to know that the Dark Continent isn't the romantic land of mystery and fiction, but I was hardly prepared for the sight I saw upon reaching that "certain point on the west coast." Why I can't name it I don't know. We've been using the place now for nearly two years and undoubtedly every Nazi agent in both hemispheres knows where it is. But I can't name it and that is that.

The moment I stepped out of the plane and saw what I did I knew something new had been added to the war—something combining ingenuity, intelligence, aggressiveness, and the offensive spirit.

Those in charge showed me around. Three months before there had been nothing where we stood. Now there were barracks, mess halls, a hospital, kitchens, latrines, and shower baths. These were in various stages of completion. An air-field was nearly finished and a seaplane base sufficiently near completion to permit the arrival and departure of planes every day.

A few months later I revisited the place. It looked like a small American town, with streets and houses and vehicles. Only a church and a corner drugstore were needed to make it a Middle-Western town.

I stood on the hill overlooking the small harbor below and looked beyond the banyan trees and the palms and the roof-tops of pre-fabricated steel buildings to the brown beach and a spur of land that curved into the sea. I fancied I saw on that spit a small modern hotel with white-coated waiters bending over tables where sat men and women in evening clothes, overnighting before flying on into the interior of a new Africa. I imagined the rhythm of a swing band and the tumult of American voices—the voices of American businessmen and tourists and students, engineers and financiers eastbound and westbound between Africa and New York.

In that fleeting, exhilarating moment, I saw hospitals and

schools for the natives who hovered respectfully at a distance just behind me.

At that moment it occurred to me that there were difficult days ahead for the United States and Britain on the question of who would own the plants and equipment which America is erecting on African soil.

And I wondered, too, whether in the hearts of Americans who come to work and fight in Africa there was not stirring already an ambition or two about—well—empire, perhaps.

The redheaded Lithuanian construction boss who was showing me about was saying, "And we didn't build all this for nothing." He was sweeping his arm in a wide arc, now, from the sea to where the road showed like a wide brown gash through the jungle leading to the airfield a few thousand yards away.

"I arrived here Christmas time. There was nothing here, nothing. Even a month ago there wasn't much. Just jungle. Just jungle and mosquitoes and suspicious black people. Well, I chopped the jungle away and I built a camp of sorts, big enough to take care of the traffic we had then. Last month we began getting equipment and materials. Bulldozers and tractors and trucks. We got the building materials and now look at the place."

There was a proprietary note in the way he talked about what he and his few white workmen and his gangs of blacks had done. It was a note which, if it is taken up by the hundreds of thousands of Americans who've poured into Africa after him, will mean much haggling at the peace conference.

A few days later I was in Cairo. At once I knew it was a new Cairo, not the city I had left the previous July. Then it had been filled with brass hats who seemed to have nothing better to do than worry about who would buy the next round. Now it was different. Joe, the barman at Shepheard's, and Rossier, the headwaiter at the Continental, assured me that

Cairo had gone to war. Cairo's scotch was rationed and there wasn't a bottle of Pol. Roger or Lanson 1928 to be had. What drinking I saw that first night in town was serious, dead-earnest drinking of men grabbing a few hours' leave before returning to the front. I felt elated.

CHAPTER IX

Why We Are in Libya

LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS after I arrived in Cairo I was on my way back to the front. Here was another sign of change. The Press Relations Department of the Army was functioning without the delay and red tape which had driven correspondents to the verge of insanity the previous year. I had hardly time to get my desert gear together before I was off to the fighting zone.

The road unrolled smoothly under our truck. For most of the way from Cairo to the front it was the same old road across the sun-hammered desert that I'd traveled a year ago. I remembered its scabby surface—huge patches of rough white stones showing through the worn macadam like enormous sores. Potholes bounced you off your seat, broke the springs and axles of trucks and cars, and slowed the flow of supplies and reinforcements to the front. Now the road was level, with sturdy shoulders. It might have been a highway back home.

I remembered detours in the hot sand around impassable stretches along the highway, how brown dust filled the back of your truck so that you couldn't breathe and couldn't see, and left you covered with a thick layer of sand as fine as talcum. These detours were rare now. When you left the road it was at a signal from a grinning tin-hatted Cape Town Negro of the South African Labor Battalion. Behind him trucks dumped crushed rock into holes, men ladled hot tar

over rocks, other men tamped the mixture down. Steam rollers rolled the longer pieces of repaired road.

Road gangs were usually composed of South African Negroes, with white officers and modern road-building machinery, but often of Indian troops who squatted on or off the highway and, working entirely with their hands, kept the lifeline of Britain's desert armies in good repair all the way to the most advanced areas, within a thousand yards of the enemy. They worked where warnings were posted to "look out for low-flying Axis aircraft." They swung picks and shovels, pushed wheelbarrows along stretches of roadbed flanked by mine fields miles deep. Some chanted as they worked.

Westward from Mersa Matruh to Sidi Barrani we averaged forty to fifty miles an hour in a Canadian-made Ford truck. I recalled how our vehicle a year ago had broken down on this stretch, how convoys were held up along the roadside waiting for overheated engines to cool off, for spare springs to arrive.

Up forward, then, British fighting units waited for ammunition that never came, and the wounded waited for ambulances that came too late or not at all.

It was seldom we saw an ambulance last year; now they passed on their way to the forward areas or we met them returning with the wounded. Many of them were lettered with "American Field Service" on the sides. We have at least one hundred and sixty ambulances operating on the desert front, materially relieving the load carried by the regular British and South African Medical Services. After a bad start, during which the American Field Service volunteers fretted with inaction in Cairo hotels and contributed measurably to the house-party atmosphere that used to prevail in the capital of the battle of Africa, they've settled down, to do a difficult job well. I met some of the boys in bombed Tobruk. They don't like to read clippings from home ex-

tolling their heroism. They said for folks back home to quit the hero stuff and to send them more ambulances.

Beyond Mersah, westward of Sidi Barrani, we crossed and recrossed a railroad. The old railhead of the line that runs out from Alexandria used to be at Mersah. Men, materials, and weapons used to be trucked from there to the front. It was one of the worst bottlenecks of the British supply system. But New Zealander sappers pushed the railhead onward deep into enemy territory during the past year, building it at the rate of two and three miles a day. The story of how that railway was extended under a broiling sun, through sandstorms, enemy strafings and bombings, is one of the engineering epics of the desert campaigns.

Smooth roads with bypasses and a network of connecting roads and tracks bulldogged across the desert; the lengthened railway and the speedy recovery of the wounded were signs of change and progress on the Mediterranean front. There were others. All the way to the front we passed supply dumps, petrol depots, water stations, munition dumps, airfields, and repair shops for tanks, vehicles, armored cars and planes, that weren't there a year ago. All were visible evidence of the British effort to overcome those deficiencies which had greatly handicapped them a year ago—deficiencies in organization of the war behind the war, in communications and supply, or in what technicians call the logistics of warfare.

My diary for that day, June 4, 1942, says:

None of this is intended to prove that the British will win the current gigantic battle in the Western Desert or that the enemy will fail in his attempt to recapture Tobruk and drive the British out of Libya. The battle probably won't be decided for days or weeks. It roars now eastward and westward just south of Gazala and Tobruk in the region of the desert point the British call Knightsbridge. It's a battle of incredible ferocity, leaving in its shifting wake dead and wounded men and hundreds of thousands of tons of scrap iron. Up forward you can hear it for miles before you

see it, and you hear it from dawn to sunset and sometimes through most of the night, especially when the enemy occasionally springs a surprise night attack or strafes and bombs us just behind the lines. They tell me here that, considering the numbers of tanks and planes engaged, the battle is comparable to the armored engagements on the Russian front.

The battle probably won't decide immediately the fate of Egypt and the Middle East, although whichever side triumphs will be in a considerably improved position. No matter what the outcome of the battle, the fact remains that the British, with American assistance, have come a long way since a year ago.

It's no longer proper to speak of the Western Desert merely as the British front. It has become an Allied front, and this is self-evident in the presence of American tanks, fighter planes, bombers, trucks, and other transport. Even Brazil is contributing. "Packed in Brazil" is stamped on the cans of corned Willy the British Tommies eat.

All that I saw on an eight-hundred-mile, ten-day journey over the front and rear areas of this battlefield contrasted sharply with what I had seen when I left Egypt in July 1941.

From the Middle East, war can be carried home to the enemy through Italy and via the Balkans at far less cost in man and machine power than would be required by an invasion of continental Europe from England.

Here I must refer again to my diary.

June 5, 1942, somewhere near Sidi Barrani:

But while Auchinleck seems to have the weapons and men to keep the Germans and Italians from conquering Egypt he has still been denied that power on land, air, and sea required to smack the enemy the kind of blow which would drive him out of Libya and possibly out of the Balkans.

June 6, 1942—Fort Capuzzo:

You ask yourself as you roll along over front-line roads or plow through desert tracks or bounce over plains or escarpments why it is that we're not doing a better job in Libya than we are. Then you see the battle-weary men who have been carrying the burden

of desert warfare alone for nearly three years and you know. Not only are the troops too few but they're also tired.

Not even Tommies who are the world's most uncomplaining soldiers can go on fighting indefinitely on canned beef, tea, and biscuits. Auchinleck's remarkable reforms in the Middle East are at least partially nullified by the fact that his men are too few and too tired.

The Axis considers the Mediterranean front important enough to maintain three German divisions and eight Italian divisions in Libya. It has six German divisions with thirty-one Italian divisions in the Balkans and twenty-nine in reserve in Italy itself. It is obvious that the Axis is awaiting only the outcome of its Caucasian campaign to launch a full-sized offensive against the Middle East. Hitler has not taken the Middle East so far principally because he hasn't really tried and because the British have managed to do the impossible with inadequate means.

Opposed to the enormous Axis power in this area, the British have only the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth armies, which, without going into actual figures, constitute an appalling quantitative manpower inferiority.

And although Auchinleck himself is one of the ablest practitioners of mechanical warfare—it was Auk who mechanized the Indian Army and for years preached mechanization while old-line cavalry officers screamed "ridiculous"—he's further handicapped by lack of sufficient numbers of capable tank tacticians. One of the best, General Jock Campbell, was killed in an automobile accident, and another, General O'Connor, was captured.

General Gott, the man they call "Strafer" Gott, is one of the few who really know how to employ and fight tanks, left on Auk's roster. In short, something like the mass arrival in the Middle East of an American Army of the proportions of that sent to Australia had better materialize very soon or the battlefield of surpassing importance called the Middle East may go to the enemy.

From a later entry that same day:

Allied officers with whom I have talked both at the front—in some cases under actual enemy fire—and in Cairo itself agree we

can't afford to lose this battlefield, for it is the keystone of the Allies' defense and supply arc across Africa, southeastern Russia, Asia, India, and Australia.

One of those with whom I talked was South Africa's General Daniel Pienaar, whose outstanding physical characteristic is an enormous pair of ears and who is intellectually remarkable largely because he's not afraid to talk back to politicians. He says the place to open that second front they talk about is here and the time is now.

He's one of the fightingest men on Auk's staff, but he admits he can't do much against those eighty-eights the German artillery have uncorked with deadly effect on our tanks. I left him yelling for someone to give him some self-propelled guns, heavy enough to wallop the German tanks. Timmi Tom interrupted our conversation. That's the name of the gun the enemy fires six or seven times daily from points twelve to fifteen miles from where General Danny, as the boys call him, hangs out in a homey little dugout with a window and iron roof and sandbag porch.

Here's how certain highly placed Allied officers see the importance of the Middle East to Democracy's cause. The advantages of holding this area are several. First of all the Middle East contains the oil of the Tigris-Euphrates Basin and the Persian Gulf. At least fourteen million tons are pumped out of southern Iran and Iraq alone. Loss of this oil, which supplies Allied armies, navies, merchant transport, and air power in this region, would mean oil would have to be transported from the United States, further complicating an already complex shipping problem. Besides, loss of the Middle East would imply loss of thirty million-odd tons of petroleum produced in the Caucasus region, for the Allied defeat and withdrawal from this arc would mean isolation of Russia, which is the aim of the Nazi assault in the Crimea and southeastern Russia.

By holding the Middle East, the Allies prevent the Moslem world, which reaches from Morocco to Mindanao, from aligning itself with the Axis. That's another powerful reason for keeping it. While the Allies hold the Middle East, our side has

at least the passive aid of some four hundred million people. If they lose the Middle East to the enemy, however, it's very likely the Axis would have the active assistance of these people.

One of our two supply routes into Russia lies across the lands of Araby athwart the region we now hold almost literally with our fingernails. This is the fourth reason advanced by British and American officers for strengthening our position here. Loss of the Middle East and therefore of the Basra-Caspian Railroad would oblige us to send all supplies to Russia via Murmansk from the north—a supply route which is dangerous and completely open only part of the year.

But perhaps the most important reason of all for preventing the passing of the Near and Middle East to the enemy is that all the hopes of millions of people living in the Mediterranean area for eventual freedom are based upon the Allies. The Yugoslavs, the Greeks, and the Moslems themselves, the people of France and those of Italy who would wish the overthrow of Fascism, look to the United States and Britain in this area for salvation. Loss of this theater would be a greater blow to the hopes for survival of Democracy than any which has yet befallen our cause. Aside from the fact that in such an event Africa would be turned over to the Axis for exploitation, Hitler and the Mikado could join forces in India, and the British Commonwealth would cease to be an entity whose components are able to communicate with one another. The British role would thereafter be confined to a purely defensive one centered on the United Kingdom.

American officers expressed the opinion that North Africa could become a powerful base for invasion of Italy and the Balkans, and an air base from which to hammer at short range the network of communications and supply Hitler has created in southeastern Europe. From here, Hitler's only available supply of crude oil—Rumania—could be persistently hammered, and the objective finally accomplished of depriving

him of this source of oil. The mistake of not blowing up the Rumanian wells could at last be corrected. Hitler's war in this theater is still a battle for oil.

I heard considerable criticism of the British war effort in this area, but all with whom I talked agreed that such criticism was far less applicable there than was the case in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaya, and Burma. Cairo isn't comparable to Singapore, for instance. I visited that city just before the Japs moved upon it, and I remember Singapore's unawareness of danger and the tendency there to regard war as something which was happening exclusively to somebody else. Cairo wasn't the city it had been a year ago when it, too, seemed to live in a golden haze of make believe.

Auchinleck changed even the spiritual atmosphere of Cairo. He ended, for example, the peacetime kind of life for his officers. He ordered them to live in messes, some of them under canvas, and he took them out of the bars of Cairo's swank hotels. The average working day of the GHQ officials became twelve hours. Whereas the censorship office, for instance, used to close at eight o'clock, it began to operate twenty-four hours a day with no time out for siestas or tea.

Auk's command was enlarged until it became roughly as big as the empire Alexander once ruled. It included Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Malta. He created a flexible organization with the Eighth Army in Libya, the Ninth in Syria, and the Tenth in Iraq and Iran.

He was responsible for relations with Turkey and with Russia in northern Iran, which lately has been called more frequently by its old name—Persia.

One of the old complaints against the way things were run in the Middle East was lack of co-ordination between the RAF and the Army. Auk changed that too. Last summer, when the Army needed the RAF at 4:17 A.M., the RAF arrived at four-seventeen and not four twenty-one.

Auk's progressive attitude toward mechanization brought

new tanks, including American Stuarts and Grants, improved British Crusaders, new twenty-five-pounder cannon, and six-pounder anti-tank guns to this battlefield. They were an improvement on the lumbering Valentine tanks of the previous year and over the guns used on this front then.

Auchinleck has lived by Churchill's dictum that "it will do no harm if we get mixed up in the process." He gave United States officers and observers every opportunity to visit the front, to teach the British and learn from them. He welcomed their instruction in the operation of our tanks and planes, doing away with that almost criminal misuse of American equipment which marked the early days. And in order that American officers might learn British methods, they attended the staff schools which Auchinleck inaugurated.

He was not too proud, either, to learn from the Germans. Take the matter of containers for gasoline. These containers used to be four-gallon tins. They littered the desert, for they were used once and thrown away, representing an incalculable waste. Also, they leaked or were easily broken at the seams. This meant enormous waste of fuel. The British had to transport at least 30 per cent more fuel to the front than was needed in order to insure an adequate supply for the particular job on hand.

Auchinleck found the German tins were better, so he had them copied. All water containers now at the front also are German. These were captured by the hundreds of thousands in the last campaign and they were copied by the British engineers. They're stout, enamel-lined metal containers holding twenty-four liters. (We have since copied them in the American Army.)

And yet despite the reforms that Auk was able to institute, the Allies in mid-June faced encirclement and possible loss of Pienaar's South African army and of heroic Tobruk. They faced the nullification of Wavell's brilliant campaign against Graziani's numerically superior forces and of Auchinleck's

last offensive which carried the British deep into Libyan territory. It was obvious for any at the front to see that what Wavell told me a year previously still was true. Wavell said then that the British couldn't hold the Middle East alone. He also said that the enemy would never take the Middle East. That, unfortunately, didn't seem quite so true by the middle of June 1942.

In my diary of June 11, I wrote:

Unless America commits a large, well-equipped army to the task of helping the Allies, the Middle East, all of South Africa, are doomed.

Within a few days I was to find myself more convinced than ever of the accuracy of that observation. And Auchinleck was to be broken under circumstances tragically like those which broke Wavell.

CHAPTER X

He Fought for Keeps

IF A GENERAL is only as good as his soldiers believe he is, then Major General Daniel Pienaar was one of the great officers of this war. Ask Pienaar's men what they thought of him. They'll tell you "He was *bobaas*," which is Afrikaans for "He was the tops." A commander often doesn't deserve the antipathy of his men. It seldom happens, however, that he doesn't merit their devotion.

Pienaar's men loved him because he never sacrificed *men* when *shells* would do. Correspondents were fond of him because he was frank, critical, and could talk of poetry and politics with appreciation and knowledge as ably as he discussed tactics and strategy.

They also liked him for his honesty, his simplicity of manner and speech, and his earthiness. He often accurately previewed events for reporters he knew he could trust. We've often known from Pienaar's analysis of the positions of the enemy and ourselves how the battle would develop, without, of course, being able either to talk or to write about it.

Judged by more orthodox standards the commander of the First South African Division proved himself an able leader. He demonstrated his technical skill in East Africa, where he contributed substantially to the destruction of a numerically and materially powerful Italian Army. From his arrival on the Western Desert to the day he was killed in an air crash the

least that could be said of him as a general was that he made no mistakes costly in men and material.

His skill as a soldier, however, never received recognition. Old Danny wore no man's old school tie. He did not belong to the fly-swish and swagger-stick school of officers. His one appurtenance was a seat-headed cane. He liked to sit and think. He was, therefore, a most unusual general.

Although his men called him "Old Danny," Pienaar wasn't old at all. He was only forty-nine, lean, sparse-haired, and tanned the color of cordovan leather. He had the skinny, well-muscled legs of a distance runner, a rather frail-looking and not remarkable body, and one of the most unusual heads you've ever seen. His head was the anthropologist's idea of the head of the man of tomorrow—wide at the forehead and tapering to an almost pointed chin, with a hard, clean jaw line. His eyes were gray. His nose was large, his lips thin and sunburned, and his face improved enormously when he smiled, which was often.

He had an arresting pair of ears. These were as big as Clark Gable's but pointed, so that when he inclined his head forward, urged his thick eyebrows upward, and crinkled his forehead, he assumed the aspect of a mischievous satyr. His speech had the precise quality of a man who thought out what he was going to say before he said it, and it bore an unmistakable Boer accent, for Dan Pienaar was a Boer.

When he was five years old he was in a British concentration camp while his father and his thirteen-year-old brother were fighting the British—"and a bloody good go we gave them too."

Pienaar's origin and the shape of his career—he had risen from the ranks—explained much about him. They explained his nearness to his men, what in a politician we would call "the common touch." But the events of his life were disturbed thrice by war—"my childhood was wrecked by the Boer War," he said, "my young manhood by World War I, and

my middle age by this recurrence of the last one." These facts explain what made Pienaar hate his enemy.

His aptitude for hatreds was as unusual a quality in this graveyard of generals as his ability to quote Omar Khayyam and the more obscure Dutch poets. Not that other officers don't hate. They do, but they're less articulate, shy in their hating. Pienaar hated well, cerebrally perhaps, but thoroughly.

He distributed his hatred equitably among Italians and Germans, not because they were Italians or Germans, but because they were Fascists and Nazis, and were allied in an ignoble mission. The fact that they had interfered with what might have been a pleasant squirehood in the hills about Pretoria was only the beginning of why Pienaar detested his enemy.

"They've stopped the clock of progress in man's evolution toward a good life in a good world," he said. "They must be destroyed."

Pienaar was not inclined to make allowances for Fascists and Nazis who followed their leaders unwillingly or because they'd been coerced into compliance. He hated Italians and Germans—it didn't occur to me to ask him about Japs—with sweet impartiality.

"If animals in your herd of cattle become infected with disease," he said, "you destroy those animals and all other cattle with which they have come in contact. You'll kill a few healthy cattle in the process, of course. That's too bad, but only so can you save your herd and your neighbor's herd."

Pienaar was one of those officers who employed the word "Hun" to describe the enemy and meant it. He rarely used the more common and impersonal "he" in speaking of the enemy. He said "Hun" or "Boche," or other words which cannot be printed. Pienaar imparted to this war in the desert a certain reality which it occasionally lacks.

Sometimes when you read the double talk which passed for English in the sterile English-language newspapers of Cairo, you wondered whether we were fighting the Fascists and

Nazis, or whether the war was something that had been left exclusively to the Russians.

Pienaar's animosity toward the Nazis and the Fascists wasn't merely verbal. It expressed itself in many highly satisfactory ways. One of these was to prevent the Nazis from enjoying the songs of their beloved Marlene. Marlene sang every night. She sang an ethereal little song called "Marlene," which was her theme song, and which was swiped by the Nazis from a piece reputedly composed by Nils Andersen, a descendant of the Hans who wrote fairy tales. It was first heard in Belgrade early in this war.

Marlene sang in a fluty, fruity voice that reminded you of Lucienne Boyer, who used to sing in a night club called Chez Elle, in the late city of Paris. Marlene was a great morale builder, but never in any enemy sector opposite Old Danny's guns. The moment she came on the radio Pienaar began shelling the enemy. "It's a good song," said Danny, "but I'm damned if the Huns are going to enjoy it."

He also devised secret ways of causing disturbances between the Italians and the Germans. One was particularly clever, but its details remain a military secret. He delighted in shelling the Italians with their own guns and ammunition.

Pienaar was an expert in knowing what not to do. And in showing some of his men what not to do—specifically, how *not* to load a 25-pounder—he lost the first joint of the middle finger of his right hand.

Essentially an artilleryman, Pienaar was a master of the art of placing guns where they would do the enemy the most harm and themselves be least likely to be discovered or effectively attacked. You may not have heard of Pienaar before except as the commander of South African troops in the Western Desert, but they've heard of him in Washington, in Moscow, and in London, where they're studying the art of war.

He was one of the first to insist that enemy tanks could be

beaten, not by other tanks with inferior or at best equal fire power, but by self-propelled or other artillery of heavier caliber than the guns carried by the tanks.

That's how the Hun fought us. He used his tanks against our lighter vehicles, known as soft-skinned stuff—armored cars, Bren gun carriers, transport, etc. The Hun whipped our tanks with anti-tank guns of progressively heavier caliber. From Tobruk to Gazala he mauled us with 88-millimeter guns.

Pienaar long before had anticipated that this would happen, so he shouted, "Give me a good self-propelled gun—never mind the armor—and I'll chase Rommel out of Libya."

His dispositions of guns and men in the battle of Tiab El Esam, and later at Bir El Gobi, during the second battle of Sidi Rezegh, when the First South African Infantry covered the withdrawal of New Zealand units, were considered models of modern tactics, which is the art of moving troops on the battlefield. American military observers made plans of Pienaar's moves and sent them to Washington.

Pienaar fumed when obliged to retreat. His withdrawal of an entire South African brigade from Gazala with the loss of only six men—these were wounded and some of them got hurt falling off trucks—is still considered one of the Western Desert's most brilliant maneuvers. But Danny didn't like to talk about it. It was retreat, and for Danny there was no glory in retreat.

Pienaar's troops acquired from the Old Man an instinct for terrain.

Pienaar could see cover and take advantage of it on this battlefield where others saw only a flat waste of camel-thorned hummocks or an inferno of unyielding sandstone. Old Danny's men learned how to dig in quickly and efficiently, guided by their commander's eye for country. Usually the troops up front, who were most safely dug into position and most effectively camouflaged, were still South Africans. This accounted for their relatively insignificant losses from Stuka and artillery attack.

Before coming to Egypt, Pienaar had already demonstrated his qualities as a tactician in the East African campaign which brought down Mussolini's papier-mâché empire. Neither the importance of South Africa's contribution to the reconquest of Ethiopia nor the importance of the destruction of a self-contained, numerically powerful, and well-armed Italian Army in East Africa has been properly evaluated.

That Black Shirt army, had it marched up the Nile Valley in concert with a successful attack on Egypt from Libya, might have meant the loss of North Africa.

Such was the enemy plan. It was detailed to me by an important Italian diplomat in a highly Latin moment of exaltation in Lisbon immediately after the fall of France and Italy's treacherous entry into the war. So confident was he of the invincibility of the Fascist legions that he felt no harm would come of telling anybody about it, but his bragging was premature. South Africans with Indian and British troops, with handfuls of old planes and guns badly in need of transport, destroyed an army many times their own size in what was one of the most important campaigns of this war. Berlin had counted heavily on the Duke of Aosta's big force south of Suez. It was to have been one of the pincers designed to pinch off Egypt and the Nile. The other was Graziani's army. Each of the pincers numbered at least 250,000 men.

Pienaar's aptitudes as a gunner and a tactician helped substantially to destroy Aosta's army. His guns reduced the Italian positions at Amba Alagi. It was his well-executed maneuver which captured Juba. He helped conquer Gelib, Forda, and Margherita. His brigade, for he was only a brigadier then, marched on Asba Littoria and assisted in the investment and capture of Addis Ababa. Dessie, garrisoned by 12,000 Italians well situated and heavily armed with cannon, capitulated to Pienaar in one afternoon. Pienaar's brigade captured thousands of prisoners, hundreds of guns, and other hundreds of trucks. His own losses, as usual, were negligible

in relation to what was accomplished. Measured in terms of accomplishment, Pienaar probably has more to his credit than most of the overpublicized officers of this war.

But of all his gifts, the greatest was perhaps his faculty for hating. Maybe in the long run it is a strength rather than a weakness—this reporter can't assess it one way or the other—but it is an obvious fact to all of us who have covered this desert war that Britons don't hate.

Hatred long ago was civilized out of Britons, which is why they use the mild appellation "Jerry" when they speak of the enemy, or call the Hun "he," and speak of him impersonally, as a scientist would of an unfilterable virus in a test tube. This is more true of officers than of men, who have a pretty good idea of what kind of world they want when this war has been won, even if they've got substantial suspicions that they might be cheated in the peace.

Pienaar never shared some of the officers' impersonal approach to war. There was none of "this is a dirty business, let's get on with it," in his attitude. He hated. He not only hated enemy soldiers, whom he recognized as servants of an iniquitous idea; he directed his venom against Quislings, fifth columnists, and other satellites of the Nazis and the Fascists, all of whom he lumped into the category of traitors.

About traitors, Pienaar liked to quote this Dutch poem. When he became really angry, he used bitter Afrikaans, and in old Dutch he once recited a verse from Holland:

*"Traitor, monster, curse of the earth,
Despicable person of nature;
God's revenge from which you've been saved until now,
May it destroy you by fire of hell.
In the last day that will break,
People will read on your earthly grave
'Here lies the curse of friend and maiden,
Who gave our Fatherland its death thrust.' "*

That's good hating in one of the theaters of war that needed faster airplanes, bigger guns, and better tanks, but also needed that intangible ingredient which drives men to kill.

We were good boxers in the Middle East, but not good killers. Pienaar had the killer instinct that is as necessary on a battlefield as it is in a boxing ring. But then Pienaar was a South African.

Not long ago they specialized in hatred down there in South Africa.

One day calamity overcame us, just as Old Danny had told us it would. Phase by phase the battle developed. Danny, dead now, but very much alive then, called each turn as it came. We would lose Tobruk, he said. We did.

CHAPTER XI

Retreat from Tobruk

AN ARAB BOY proffered an egg in his dirty brown hand. The hot afternoon wind pressed his loose galabeh to his body and he looked like a small, slim, roadside statue bronzed by the desert dust. Two girls smaller than he but fuller in their bodies to the point of miniature womanliness, in purple dresses that covered them from neck to toe, held up canisters of small, bright red tomatoes.

Their father squatted disinterestedly off the road beside a large shallow basket of eggs. He came suddenly to life when we tried to buy from his children with paper money. He wanted silver. He'd heard the British were retreating. Egyptian paper money would be worthless if the enemy reoccupied the region through which we were passing, but the Arab could smelt coins and recover the silver.

We were in the Senusi country on our way to Tobruk. The Senusi were already converging on Tobruk with their camels and donkeys to gather up what loot the Italians and Germans would leave. There was something historically absurd in this. It was at Tobruk that Graziani slaughtered the Senusi tribesmen by the tens of thousands in Italy's "pacification" of Libya after World War I. To the tribesmen, however, the struggle which was going on over their land had no relation to them personally.

We wondered what the Arabs knew that we didn't know. We knew that the battle to hold what our Allies had gained

in Libya in the winter campaign wasn't going too well but as yet there had appeared no sign of danger. Dan Pienaar had warned us, but excluding as evidence the carefully retouched pictures of the military position contained in the nightly broadcasts from London which we heard on the radio in the advanced press-corps camp we'd left that morning, there still wasn't any visible sign that we were cracking under the pounding from the Afrika Korps' panzers, Stukas, and 88-millimeter guns. On the contrary, our Allies looked strong and quietly confident. Our planes held the skies.

The whole pattern of our movement westward inspired confidence and seemed a design for victory in the early days of the second phase of the campaign. The first phase had ended with Rommel's penetration, in two or three points, of the Allied defensive line from El Gazala on the coast of Bir Hacheim in the south. Rommel had banged a huge bulge in their line but he seemed to be trapped in an area roughly shaped like the cross-section of a big-bellied, spoutless teapot.

Trucks, ammunition, and supplies snarled forward in endless convoys. Refitted tanks, fresh for battle, jolted and squeaked along or were borne on the backs of enormous trucks. The traffic tore roads into sticky ribbons of sun-softened macadam, and work parties repaired them almost as fast as the damage occurred. Our Bostons roared overhead in echeloned triads toward enemy targets. Fighters whoomed low, snarling like terriers, westbound to strafe men and planes, or they drew thin lines of frozen exhaust gases across a sky that seemed as smooth and brilliant as bright blue tinfoil.

The lines of pattern of the Allied effort moved from west to east, converging on where the enemy surged against the El Gazala-Bir Hacheim line, and the power and energy of that effort were reflected in the jaunty manner in which the men rode their vehicles and in their co-ordinated "We-know-what-we're-doing" movements.

The Arabs, we thought, as our chuck truck and staff car

moved forward along the highway Italo Balbo had built from Tunisia to the Libyan-Egyptian frontier for the conquest of Egypt, must be wrong. Their instincts, we said to ourselves, have played them false this time.

I felt an unaccountable exhilaration. Maybe it was thinking of how we were using his own road to invade Balbo's domain; maybe it was the fresh current of sea air we caught as we rounded the hump where Bardia lay north of us; and perhaps it was at the first sight, just over the ridge, of the tortured town of Tobruk. On seeing it, I experienced a curious sensation of having seen it before, although I knew I hadn't. And then I suddenly realized it wasn't the physical resemblance of Tobruk to any town or city I'd known but rather a spiritual likeness to something I'd known before.

Cities and towns, like human beings, acquire personalities of their own through suffering and struggle. For this Tobruk I saw might have been Madrid or Barcelona or any other bombed and shelled and fire-tried agglutination of dwellings and shops and churches men build.

Tobruk wasn't much of a town as such. It was built for a population of about twenty to thirty thousand whites. Its architecture was that heavy modern style Mussolini insisted upon, and as we dipped down from the escarpment toward the curve of the deep blue harbor that lay between us and the town, it presented the strangely undamaged appearance of a blob of parallel lines of white, sienna brown, and robin's-egg-blue walls tiered up the brown slope of the hill behind it. A minaret, a church steeple, and a tall water tower emerged remarkably from the mass of masonry of the flat roofs.

Men, white and black, bathed in the sun-warmed, shallow water at the harbor's edge. As we drew nearer we saw dead ships. Nearest to view, on the eastern margin of the bay, were piled hulks of Italian merchant ships, two or three of perhaps ten thousand tons, beached and blasted, three quarters of their

hulks in the water, their prows protruding ridiculously onto the shore.

Now we were on the edge of the shovel-shaped bay and could see other ships, perhaps twenty or twenty-five small cutters, one- and two-thousand tonners, which had been sunk in the continual bombings by the enemy while the British held Tobruk, and by our Allies before the Aussies captured the town in January 1941. At the far northwest end of the harbor lay the fused, fire-blackened wreckage of the Italian battleship *San Giorgio* which they'd anchored there as a fortress to protect the town.

All the while I surveyed that graveyard of dead ships, whose masts and superstructures only were visible, their hulls mere shapeless dark blobs in the metal-blue water, we'd drawn closer to the town itself. Then it was that I saw that the minaret was gnawed, that the church steeple was shrapnel-pocked, and that the shell-bitten water tower stood only by some miracle of gravity and physics, for its underpinnings had been all but blown away. The tower itself would never hold water. A ragged patch of blue sky as big as an automobile showed through it. The illusion of an unharmed city was dispelled.

A military cop in a red hat with white gauntlets reaching to his elbows directed traffic at the city's gates. Inside Tobruk we made for the central square. En route, there was too much for eyes to see or mind to register. Streets that looked whole from the paving on the roadbed to the walls on either side turned out to be dead streets, hollow behind battered walls, ragged window casements and doorways, and all roofless. It was remarkable that a town whose population of fighting men was at the moment roughly equal to what it was in peacetime seemed deserted. Then you realized that Tobruk lived underground in great caverns that the besieged had dug. A few military police came round the corner, clean-shaven and ready for inspection, marching in twos toward the building where

was lettered over the lintel in Italian, *Carabinieri Reale*, in English, Police Station.

Then I began to see other men, a few Indians, numerous sturdy-legged South Africans, and a variety of British troops. It was late in the afternoon now, and Tobruk was changing guard for the night vigil which would know bombs and defensive pyrotechnics of ack-ack guns, Bofors and machine guns firing futilely at those damnable flares the enemy dropped at night, the better to kill by.

No one paid any attention to us obvious newcomers, seeking water and information about where to camp that night. There was something of a camaraderie of aloofness among the defenders of Tobruk, as though they belonged to an exclusive society of their own creation. In the hallway of the hospital South African soldiers slept in heaps on benches and on the floor. A few who were half awake regarded us coldly.

We met four or five Americans of the American Field Service in a dormitory in one wing of the hospital. They talked eagerly of the job they were doing, of how they lugged two or three hundred wounded daily to embarkation points along the coast.

Tobruk was the clearinghouse for wounded from the front when our front extended westward as far as El Gazala.

We filled our water tanks from cisterns hung with signs which warned "This water must be chlorinated." We dipped our stoppered felt-covered canteens into the spill-over barrels to wet the felt and keep the brackish water inside them cool. It was in the orange-colored moment before twilight when we pulled out of Tobruk toward the spot inside the perimeter of the town to camp for the night.

Tobruk smelled sweetly of sea and heavily of death and pain and sweat. It smelled, too, of powdery plaster and broken masonry. It had the smells of a building being torn down by house wreckers. Its untraveled streets were newly carpeted with shell fragments and fallen bits of flak and chunks of

bombs. In the parking lot were carcasses of captured vehicles and stripped chassis, scavenged by mechanics for parts with which to repair other vehicles.

I was half glad, half sorry to leave. I wanted to share with the defenders at least one night of that hell which would inevitably be poured upon them at moonrise. It would have been comparatively safe. While we watered, I asked one of the troops whether they'd had many casualties. He told me they hadn't. He said that, night after night, the enemy would dump bombs on them without hurting anybody. But he said they had a few who had become bomb-happy. I was glad to leave for this reason.

You can take death, but madness—the particular kind of madness deriving from bomb shock—is hard to take. If you realize that, you come nearer to knowing what it was the defenders of Tobruk faced those four nights when the enemy went to work on the tortured town. Until then enemy bombings had been desultory by comparison.

It was almost dark by the time we reached the camp site—a sandbagged dugout in a rise of earth in a wadi just inside Tobruk's defenses—and ate our corned Willy and dry biscuit, and downed the tannic-acid solution the Tommies euphemistically called tea.

The rough ground where we camped was filthy with the excrement of war. A couple of Tommies who appeared out of nowhere warned us that the ground was littered with anti-personnel bombs and not to go about in the darkness, as contact might explode one. George Lait of International News Service, Chester Morrison of the Chicago *Sun*, and I laid our sleeping bags on low cots outside a two-roomed sandbagged dugout. Match light had disclosed the dugout to be uninhabitable, and anyhow you get so that you prefer to sleep in the open on battlefields. You feel you see things coming, and there's comfort, too, in being able to look up at the stars and watch them fall occasionally in long, bright arcs,

and you wonder whether they look the same in Bronxville.

We slept with our clothes on. We were awakened about midnight by the bright yellow light of flares and immediately we heard the familiar whoom-whoom-whoom of enemy aircraft which have a peculiarly dissynchronized harsh sound in flight.

The moon hadn't yet appeared and it was a pitch-black night, which explained the enemy's flares, for they must have known, by now, where Tobruk lay. They'd bombed it often enough and, next to Malta, Tobruk was the most bomb-harassed area in the world. North of us, where the town lay, searchlights reached upward, their beams desperately scanning the sky to find the enemy. Directly over our heads ack-ack shells burst, hung momentarily like golden balls on a Christmas tree, and died. As they snuffed out, we could hear sharp, corresponding reports of the guns that had fired them. The volume of ack-ack gradually increased. There was an aurora borealis of light over Tobruk so sharp it stung our eyes. Bofors guns and machine guns fired at flares to try to put them out. Yellow, red, and green tracers streamed toward the yellow lamps the devils had hung in the black sky, and while Tobruk's defenders fired at these, other flares appeared just to the left of us or due south of the town.

We put on our tin hats. A few machine guns near by started shooting at the new flares and we cursed them for giving away their position. It was just what the enemy wanted. He wanted to ascertain where every gun had been relocated. He dropped few bombs on Tobruk. The planes that night were on a check survey flight; machine after machine rode over the town and defensive areas of Tobruk, flying high and beyond reach of those eager searchlights and the futile flak of the defenders to spot exactly where the guns were.

The earth under us shook with the impact of explosions from Tobruk—explosions that merged one into another so rapidly as to produce one prolonged quivering of earth and sky and air about us. The whoom-whoom of planes came

lower and lower, and we knew they were headed in our direction. We waited, and then they let us have it—two bombs, 500-pounders by the sound of them. They threw up two Gargantuan cones of red-and-yellow flame five hundred and one thousand yards from us on the perimeter defenses. The explosions were awfully, hideously beautiful. Spent fragments whistled distantly, and very suddenly the world was quiet. They came again just before daybreak, but we paid little attention.

Next day we wondered why the enemy had bombed so far from Tobruk. A few days later we knew. They bombed those points on the outer works of the citadel upon which they launched the final assault that conquered Tobruk—veteran of sieges, held once for two hundred and fifty days and destined to fall in less than five.

All day we trucked along toward the front. All day the sounds of firing from guns and anti-tank guns quivered on the horizon about us, often so close that the voices of the guns throbbed in our brains and caused us to breathe deeply, rapidly. Late in the afternoon we came upon the elements of the Fourth Armored Brigade drawn up on the flat desert between the distant sea and one of the many ridges of this scarped and hateful land.

Beyond the ridge lay the enemy, seven hundred to a thousand yards away, maneuvering for position, seeking to outflank the Fourth. Mobile artillery sped along the ridge top to prevent the enemy maneuver, protected armored vehicles and Grant tanks of the Fourth on the left, center, and right.

"We expect contact at about six-thirty tonight," the lead brigade commander said.

I asked him whether he intended to attack. He replied no; he wouldn't attack. He expected the enemy would shoot first. "But we're ready for him."

I wondered why it was that, since the general was ready to strike, he hadn't chosen to strike first instead of leaving the

initiative to the enemy. But it was possible, in fact very probable, that the general had his orders. Somebody else way back, where you couldn't hear firing, was sticking pins and drawing lines on maps and had decided how the elements in this deadly chess game should be employed.

Along telephone lines laid on the desert floor connecting GHQ with hundreds of advanced sub-headquarters and observation posts, orders were passing back and forth in code. The Germans were barking them out by short-wave radio in the clear and losing no time. Our side was still playing the game the old way, sending and receiving orders in complicated, ever-changing codes.

Men coded, decoded, recoded, decoded, while the enemy, with professional thoroughness and confidence that even if his messages were intercepted there wouldn't be time for the British to act upon them, shifted his pieces on the checkerboard of the battlefield with dazzling rapidity. We seemed always trying to convert pawns into queens while the enemy appeared always to have his queen in our king's row.

We pulled out from the terrain that would be the battlefield as soon as the sun dipped slightly and the mirages that baffled our eyes and senses subsided. We made for El Adem where on a ridge overlooking the coastal plain we made camp with the rearguard elements of an Indian division—Gurkhas with keen eyes and soldierly bearing and lithe, clean bodies.

I chose a shallow, waist-deep trench long enough for my camp bed, barely wide enough to move around in, but still sufficiently large to overcome the feeling of acute claustrophobia you get in any trench or dugout. Usually the trenches are so narrow you feel as though you're sleeping in a grave. I cleaned this one out with a pick and shovel, poured half my gallon ration of brown water into a basin, and had a reasonably thorough wash.

All of us had forgotten the ominous Arab egg-seller and looked forward to a good supper. Captain Kim Mundy, our

conducting officer, had promised bully disguised as curried beef with fried potatoes. We anticipated a good night's sleep—the first in many days—in a quiet sector.

Immediately we'd finished Kim's incredibly hot curry we had a long talk with the intelligence officer, a pipey, mustachioed fellow whose omniscience was impressive. He said the enemy was nowhere in the vicinity and guaranteed us we'd be undisturbed that night. His camp was near by, in a deep wadi, and it was nearly dark when we returned to our camp. There was a thick band of cinnamon between sky and desert in the west. Stars were visible, and an unusually cold wind was coming in from the sea. It was going to be a cold night. Dew was heavy on our faces.

In the west, as far as the eye could see, which was about ten miles from our ridge, a column of flame shot skyward and burned there with undiminished intensity, like the distant, smoky torch of an exploded oil or gas well. Moments later we heard the dull, muted sound of an explosion. Then to the right of that column came another similar pillar of fire, and then others until there were seven. We couldn't make out what they were. We gathered together talking in low, almost awed tones about what might have caused the explosions. Not aircraft certainly, or we'd have heard them. Then it dawned on us. Those were our trucks or tanks burning. The explosions were mines of our own mine field. This could only mean—retreat.

In the thirty minutes that followed, as darkness thickened into an almost gelatinous blackness, menacing and impenetrable, we witnessed what must in all human experience be for participants therein one of the most humiliating emotions—the panic of blind, headlong flight. We saw it and became part of it.

Roaring in the night across the desert came the vehicles and weapons of the Indian units which held that region between Acroma and El Adem. We could hear rather than see them.

Plumes of dust that trailed them were barely distinguishable —faint gray streaks in the blackness.

I thought of the Arab. One of the English officers said, "Bit of a flap on, it seems." "Flap" is British understatement. This was a flaperoo. The rest of that night was one of sounds and lights and smells, for we could see nothing. There was no moon.

Purely by touch we gathered up equipment, piled it into trucks and cars, and moved off eastward. I guided my driver. I take vitamin tablets; he didn't. He was night blind. I guided him by following the dark patch of shadow under the vehicle of our conducting officer immediately ahead, slowed him or accelerated him by listening to the motor of the preceding machine. Several times we almost ran the advance car down. The officer ahead was steering a compass course toward the main road or toward where he thought it was.

I heard the crunching of wood ahead and the sounds trucks and cars make in soft earth. Then, suddenly, we were in it, too, and I ordered the driver to halt. I got out of the truck and peered down and felt the ground with my hands. The sound of wood breaking was the sound of crosses breaking. We'd stumbled upon an enemy graveyard. "Blimey—blimey!" the driver said.

I debated a moment, but only for a moment, whether I could replace all the crosses. I reached down to right at least one, but my hand no sooner touched it than I dropped it. Our three vehicles fought their way out of the soft mounds of sand onto solid ground in three or four frenzied minutes that seemed hours.

A few minutes later we were in the midst of hundreds of growling, whimpering, grinding trucks headed eastward again, and then we halted. With motors cut, there was an awesome silence, broken only by sounds about us of picks and shovels, the chunk-chunk of thousands of men digging desperately into the earth. It was as though the sounds ants make were magni-

fied millions of times into an enormous chorus of systematic labor.

It was impossible to know where we were. We knew only that the Gurkhas had stopped and so had we. We knew if the enemy were advancing we'd be bombed and strafed, but we were all weary to the point of collapse. We decided to set watches. Those whose turn it was to sleep were pressed to the earth by the cold. We were cold and wet with dew, in sleeping bags laid on the ground.

During my watch, between midnight and one o'clock, the enemy decided to stage one of their renowned night tank actions. This turned out to be merely a patrol probing our strength, but it was nonetheless a fascinating spectacle. Far to the west and off to the left a green flare appeared close to the ground. Then one at the extreme right—a yellow one. A red flare appeared in the center. I knew they couldn't be Very lights, for those would have shot higher into the air. These flares couldn't have been more than ten or fifteen feet off the ground.

They were signal lights mounted on tanks. I awakened George Lait. We held a brief council of war to decide whether to pull out of there or not. We decided to stick it out. The Gurkhas roared away in their trucks a few minutes later, and we kept close watch on those moving lights that burned brighter and came closer each minute. But we had to stay where we were. There might be mine fields to the east of us, or retreating columns might attack.

Behind us Tobruk was getting it again, and the futile pyrotechnics of ack-ack and searchlight defense we'd witnessed the night before were repeated. My watch was up. I went to sleep. Just before I turned the watch over to George Lait I saw there were four flares in the west probing the darkness this way and that, but they were at least a thousand yards away, and we knew we could outrun them. There would be plenty of warning from our sentinel.

Morning came with a slap of sunlight in our faces. We had the field all to ourselves. There were sounds of firing in the west, but otherwise it was as peaceful and desolate as a plain in America's Midwestern dust bowl. We breakfasted on tea biscuits and canned fruit and returned to the press camp, then located at Gambut. There we learned that the previous night's flap hadn't been anything serious. It was described merely as an enemy action to ascertain our strength in the region between El Gazala and Tobruk, in the vicinity of Acroma. The whole thing was treated with what seemed to us undeserved levity. "Bit of flap, don'tcha know."

We felt outraged rather than sheepish. We felt that the bright young intelligence major whose job it was to know what was happening at every point on the front should have known that enemy columns were present practically under his nose. It seemed to us that there was an abominable lack of co-ordination of information up forward. We'd been told there was no enemy in our sector. Very likely, therefore, our troops hadn't been aware of the advance of the enemy in territory which we were supposed to control completely. We saw the burned-out shells of trucks that had run onto mines in the flap next day. Men died in them.

For the next few days the battle for Libya roared furiously, and then one day Bir Hacheim fell. The gallant French defenders of the southern end of that thick, mined-in desert Maginot which General Neil Ritchie had created were flanked. Its most vulnerable point was penetrated in the middle. Pienaar's South Africans were obliged to leave El Gazala, and Tobruk was again besieged. Everywhere we found battle-weary troops and rumors of parachutists.

The lines of supply that had surged so smoothly, so strongly westward began to flow eastward in our direction. Tired men filled eastbound trucks which no longer moved in orderly convoys of vehicles equidistant from one another but one close to the other, noses to backs, dusty, groaning with weight.

Their motors whimpered where they had roared a few days before. The tools of road repairers lay abandoned in the dust by the roadside.

We bucked the retreating tide of men and machines, climbed the escarpment, determined to reach Tobruk. We'd been told Tobruk could hold out again for two or three months. We reached Sollum and found the road blocked. It had been closed by our sappers with mines two hours earlier, when eleven enemy tanks and an unascertained number of armored vehicles were reported headed that way.

We halted atop upper Sollum beyond the Egyptian barracks to eat a few sardines for lunch when an American tank clattered and squeaked in our direction. A handsome young artillery captain with a tired face covered by a fine layer of dust out of which two bright blue eyes peered emerged from the turret and asked in a quiet voice the road to Capuzzo.

He didn't know the Germans had Capuzzo. He knew only that the canteen there was giving away rum, canned goods, all its stores, because they could not destroy rations accumulated for a million men fast enough. We gave him and his weary, grimy crew stiff slugs of gin diluted in lime, then clattered off up the road toward the road block to confer with the colonel who held the position with a few armored vehicles and one tank.

In the distance there was the faint sound of an explosion, and as we turned to look in its direction we saw a straight, tall column of black smoke rise from the ground about a thousand yards off. Someone, probably a tank operating out of Tobruk in our direction, had got one of the German armored cars. Its funeral pyre accentuated the lonely horror of the moment as we looked across the tangle of barbed wire and stakes that held it, protruding askew out of the blasted soil.

We cut across from Sollum to Halfaya and descended the escarpment. Two hours later Tobruk fell.

CHAPTER XII

Fear Comes to Cairo

ERWIN ROMMEL reached El Alamein by the end of June. This placed him at the edge of the Nile Delta, in the scraggly fig groves some sixty or sixty-five miles west of Alexandria. Shopkeepers with easy loyalties removed from their display windows the faded photographs of King George and Winston Churchill to make place for those of Hitler and Mussolini. The Italian population made little cakes for the advancing Afrika Korps. Eventually Australian troops coming into the line from east of Suez, where they'd been resting, ate the dainties.

Alexandria jittered. I sensed in the city an unaccountable air of relief as well. It would be absurd to believe other than that the majority of Alexandria's polyglot population would prefer the presence of Italians and Germans to that of Britishers. Alexandria is a great port and was a great naval base. But it was and is, also, a resort. It thrives on tourists. The fat, oily dragoman in a Western suit, an Eastern tarboosh, and dirty shirt who helped me buy a new sleeping bag—I had lost mine in the retreat from El Adem and Acroma—muttered endlessly his indignation against "the people who have made for us this war."

In his strictly one-track mind, the palm-to-pocket track of the bulk of Levantine, Syrian, Greek, Arab, and Armenian thinking, my dragoman held the British responsible for having brought war to Egypt and for having driven away the lush

tourist traffic upon which Alexandria thrived. He told me of fat tips given to him by Gary Cooper and a dozen other Hollywood stars whose names he spoke with large and sycophantic familiarity.

Alexandria received in those days its first real bombings of the war. The British Government was obliged to contribute large sums for relief of the homeless and the bereaved. I saw no evidence that the millions of dollars assigned by the British Government were being properly expended by the Egyptian authorities for food, housing, and medical attention to the sufferers. There was some relief work, but nothing to cause me to believe that the people were obtaining the care the British had intended to provide with their generous appropriations. I strongly suspect that large chunks of the money went into the pockets of unscrupulous politicians.

I am certain American newspaper readers at the time did not know how close to disaster we came in Egypt in June 1942. I am positive of this because there was an understandable reticence on the part of the military authorities to permit details to be transmitted by the correspondents. Berlin monitors all wireless communications out of the Middle East and scrutinizes every item for possible military clues as well as for any news unfavorable to the Allies which Joe Goebbels can use for propaganda or counterpropaganda purposes.

Now that the danger is well past, I do not believe there can be any harm in disclosing what undoubtedly the German High Command has by this time already ascertained from some of the 50,000 Axis spies operating in the Middle East. This is that the British Navy was practically extinct in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean Fleet had, since the war's outset, borne the burden of combat and, lacking air support, had been whittled down. The losses sustained by the valiant Mediterranean Fleet in the evacuations of Greece and Crete had never been made good. And what little was left of the fleet was withdrawn in the last days of June and early days

of July. Technicians prepared to blow up British naval installations. We danced and dined and wined and were cheated outrageously by Polish and Greek refugee barkeeps along Alexandria's beach front, and we were sure each drink would be the last in Alexandria.

Cairo jittered too. There was talk of abandoning Alexandria and the word reached Cairo with the speed of heat lightning. Cairo was in a turmoil of fear. I thought often in those weird days during which, very suddenly, the city seemed hostile and unfamiliar, of General Wavell's promise: The enemy will never reach the Nile. He had told me so the year before as he left the Middle East for his new and more important command in India. I tried to comfort a few friends with Wavell's words, but they wouldn't be comforted. At the risk of being accused by the reader of post-facto prophecy I quote now from my diary for June 25: "The battle for Egypt began today. The outlook seems hopeless. And yet I'm convinced we will hold them."

I had little to go on. I had just returned from the desert, where the chaotic state of General Neil C. Ritchie's Eighth Army was as obvious as it was disheartening. Something of the chaos in the desert had filtered back to the citizens and refugees and other foreigners who overfilled noisy, hot, sun-enameled and moon-lacquered Cairo. On Friday, June 26, Cairo experienced its first daylight air-raid alarm. For half an hour the city was quiet. I watched the Wogs (an opprobrious Britishism for Egyptians) close their shutters and hurry to shelter. They were terrorized and yet they were strangely calm. Perhaps what I thought was fear among the citizenry of Cairo was merely a deepening antagonism against the Europeans in their midst. The white folks didn't set a very good example.

Shopkeepers all wanted to know how things were at the front. They expressed an eagerness and an alarm I'd never noticed before. John Jones, a wealthy English proprietor of

the biggest tailoring and military supply house in the city, worried about his money. He wondered how he could smuggle some 100,000 Egyptian pounds out of the country. He'd already managed to ship out a small fortune and had opened accounts in New York. He inquired whether, in my opinion, his money would be safe in South Africa. I presume he reasoned that even if North Africa fell to the enemy it would take quite some time for the Axis to reach down the length of Africa to conquer General Smuts's Union.

The handsome young clerk at Hachette, the booksellers where I occasionally found copies of *Collier's* and once bought an unexpurgated edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, was troubled. He was a Syrian Jew. He didn't want to be in Cairo when Rommel came. At Wybrow's the tailors distractedly stitched together uniforms for Polish and Greek and Fighting French officers newly arrived to fight for Democracy and to live, luxuriously, in Shepheard's, the Continental, and the better pensions.

I found it impossible to discover what the average Egyptian thought of it all. It occurred to me, however, that perhaps there isn't an average Egyptian. It came to me suddenly that the Egyptians with whom one comes into contact aren't Egyptians at all but an amorphous mass of peoples ranging from expatriate Britishers to Armenians. Egypt is, as it has always been, a land of fabulous wealth and equally preposterous poverty. A few Egyptians own the land, the cotton, the real estate, and the oil concessions. The many work the land and starve quietly on a wage of a piaster per diem—about five cents. The many are the incredibly dirty fellahin. The few are the fat, porcine, and generally unlovable rich who were accustomed to passing most of their time in Paris and Monte Carlo and the spas of Europe, but were now dividing their time between Alexandria and Cairo and their villas along the Nile. These bemoaned their restricted life and played the market. For them, as always, there was plenty of food, gaso-

line, tires, automobiles, perfume, silks, British woolens, and Italian tailors and Parisian seamstresses.

A few stock manipulators must have urged Premier Hussein Sirry Pasha to declare himself on the war in the name of profits, for one day he called a secret cabinet meeting and informed his colleagues that Great Britain had not asked Egyptian Army assistance in the defense of the nation. By such a flimsy and devious device the stock market was compelled upward and somebody or other made a profit. Even beer prices went up. A handful of Egyptians cornered the beer market. Most of the beer is American, in cans. There were, in July 1942, some millions of cans lying in storehouses or out on the open desert in piles in the vicinity of Suez. The beer was carried, largely, in American bottoms. By careful control of the market the retail price in Cairo was as high as fifty-five cents a can in American money. Troops in the desert were rationed to a can or at the most two cans a week—beer was so hard to obtain!

The dollar softened against the piaster. This was the surest possible indication of what was in the minds of those Egyptians who controlled the finances of Egypt. They were certain the Axis was about to win Egypt. The British did what they could to stanch the bleeding confidence of the Egyptians. Every day large black headlines in the bought press assured Egyptians that all was going very well indeed, but the effect was the reverse of what was intended. The Arabs—and Egyptians are Arabs no matter how much they like to believe otherwise—weren't fooled into thinking the new British retreat was anything less than another bad beating.

It needed only eyes to see that the British didn't believe their own talk about "strategic retreat." Lorries drove up to offices and pulled away with everything that wasn't fastened down—files, furniture, personal belongings, rugs, the impedimenta of long and comfortable residence. There was every sign of evacuation and Cairo's citizens weren't fooled. The

Nubian servant who made my bed at Shepheard's told me he, too, was leaving. He didn't like to admit why. He was frightened. But what frightened him even more was that his white masters very evidently didn't believe they could hold Cairo. Newspapermen took to buying weapons or wangling them from American and British Army authorities. In my room one night a dispirited British Army captain (not a top-flight specimen, it's true) wept with his face in his hands, crying:

"What has happened to us—what has happened to us British, we who would own and rule the world?"

In the midst of this confusion I received a telegram from my editor, William Ludlow Chenery, to proceed at once to Lourenço Marques, in Portuguese East Africa—several thousand miles away and only four or five days in which to get there—and I don't believe any telegram he had ever sent me quite infuriated me so much. I tried as best I could to make my office in New York understand the seriousness of the situation. I didn't want to leave Cairo. Here was, probably, almost certainly, one of the greatest stories of World War II. The Exodus from Egypt. It wasn't just another story. What was about to happen had classic overtones. It suggested a great symphony, at least an opera. This was a bigger story than the fall of Burma, the capitulation of Singapore, the retreat from Dunkirk. This was the backbone of the British Empire snapping and a turning point in history as decisive as Salamis or Waterloo, Vittoria or Gettysburg. I stalled.

In the first place I couldn't obtain transportation. How was I to get to Lourenço Marques where, according to my instructions, I was to meet the exchange ship carrying home to America our diplomats (including Joseph Grew) from Japan where they'd been held prisoners since Pearl Harbor? Obviously I must fly and equally obviously there would be no planes. But the orders from New York became too urgent to neglect any longer. Apparently there was much at stake. I was to see Ambassador Grew and try to secure from him,

at a price, the exclusive magazine rights to any book, diary, or papers he wished to publish. I played my hunch that Cairo would still be there in a month or two and sought out friends in the American Military Mission to help me find a place on a southbound plane to Khartoum where I could connect with a BOAC flying boat for Lourenço Marques. The BOAC people in Cairo told me they had no space from Cairo to Khartoum but that I might be able to get a seat on a plane leaving Khartoum July 6. My deadline for meeting Grew was July 10. Flying time, I knew, was four days, barring overheated motors and bad weather. With luck I should arrive in Lourenço Marques July 9. This was July 2. General Russell Maxwell, then commander of American forces in North Africa, courteously approved passage for me on a Douglas sky truck to Khartoum. I said good-by to Chet Morrison and George Lait, dined quietly that evening with Randolph Churchill, Brigadier General and Mrs. John Marriott, and, the next morning, left Cairo.

At dawn the big Douglas rose from the airport at Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, with forty passengers. They jammed the aisle and sprawled on the floor and in the baggage compartment—wherever they could find leg room in a ship built for twenty-three. The passengers were United States Army officers, legation secretaries, airplane mechanics, and American Red Cross field workers. Five were women; one was a three-year-old boy. For the first time in their lives all were experiencing the humiliations and heartbreaks of flight before an enemy. It was July 3 and, ironically, they were to celebrate Independence Day in Luxor, Assouan, Khartoum, and Asmara, tagged and shipped and about as independent as so many head of cattle.

The Americans were experiencing what Poles, Czechs, French, Yugoslavs, Greeks, and others have known before them—hasty farewells to families and friends they might never see again, abandonment of homes and familiar things with

which they'd lived, and the multitude of problems of people suddenly uprooted from jobs, separated from property, and become refugees overnight.

You quietly hoped this wouldn't happen to other fellow countrymen. You calmly prayed that Americans at home would never know roads crowded with cars piled with hastily gathered belongings; airports, railroad stations, and docks filled with men and women and children in flight. It isn't a pleasant sight.

Upward of four hundred Americans fled from Cairo during the crucial three days preceding Auchinleck's stand at El Alamein, where the Egyptian desert narrows to a bottleneck between the sea and the edge of the Qattara salt marsh fifty miles to the south.

Those weird days during which Cairo lived from rumor to rumor, oscillating violently between profound pessimism and the heights of optimism, demonstrated again the power of propaganda. The enemy bombarded Egypt with broadcasts.

"The Axis isn't making war on the Egyptian people," shouted Radio Roma. "It means merely to liberate Egypt from the domination of the British. Don't worry! Lay in a week's supplies and remain indoors—no harm will come to you. But see that the Jews and Greeks don't get away."

The Jewish and Greek refugees were disturbed. On the first day, the Ministry of the Interior ran out of stamps for exit visas; banks couldn't cope with the withdrawals and were obliged to reissue pound notes previously recalled from circulation for replacement.

Automobiles which had become scarcer than new ones at home and sold at fantastic prices—such as \$3,000 for a second-hand, low-priced make—suddenly swamped the market. I could have bought a year-old car in excellent condition for \$500, and I almost did, for the tires—only I couldn't figure out a way of putting the transaction into my expense account.

Hysteria spreads in an endangered city much as a disease must spread throughout the circulatory system of a human body. The virus of fear enters the streets and buildings of a city, and gradually the city's heartbeat quickens. People's voices grow louder. The volume of traffic and the noise it makes increase in the streets. People's movements quicken and their gregarious instincts assert themselves strangely. They want to be together, to find out what others know about the "situation," but they make their plans for escape alone. Self-preservation dominates love and hate and the primary rules of friendship. The instinct for self-preservation asserts itself so strongly that it enables acquisitive, property-loving people to abandon all they own.

The first symptoms of fear in Cairo—that had seemed so safe, so remote from war—were felt upon the fall of Mersa Matruh. It had been the popular notion that the British armies would make a major stand there instead of drawing the enemy as far eastward as El Alamein. Nobody had told the people that, but everyone believed Egypt would live or die on the defense position that reached southward from Mersa Matruh.

When that town fell, refugees and évacués began arriving from Alexandria, the obvious target of Rommel's advance. Well-dressed women held onto the leashes of spaniels and terriers with one hand and clutched jewel boxes with the other. Jewel boxes are always a dead giveaway.

For Americans, the most significant straw in the wind was word from the legation that it might be wise to evacuate. They had been warned repeatedly for the past two years that unless they had substantial reasons for remaining in Cairo it would be a good idea to go home while ships were still available and while America was still neutral. But nobody paid any attention to the admonitions from tall, imperturbable Alexander Kirk, the American Minister.

Finally, on the day when fear drove scores to the legation to learn what would be the best way of getting home—in some

cases to demand immediate air transport to Brazil and home, as though such accommodation was the inalienable right of Americans—callers found scraps of charred paper whirling about in a lazy breeze in the vicinity of the legation building. Documents were being burned.

Somehow there's something final and irrevocable about the fact that an embassy or a legation burns its documents. For nearly three years correspondents had cabled such news from capitals of Europe, the Balkans, the Far East, as the first paragraphs of obituaries on diplomatic relations between Axis nations and those in the Democratic camp, or as death notices of at least a score of countries. It was a familiar sight at the American legation.

In the mild and largely unnecessary chaos of the crisis the PAA officials kept their heads. They anticipated the legation's last-minute demands for transportation for legation staffs, civilians, and members of the large military missions. They had planes ready, and trucks were waiting to carry passengers to the airport; they had worked out every detail of where the people should be distributed. They hadn't anticipated the Army's insistence on priority for military people over diplomats and civilians. Neither had the civilians.

In contrast to Americans and other foreigners who became affected by the prevailing "flap," which is British for panicky withdrawal, the English, at least outwardly, retained their poise. The British Ambassador's wife, pretty, petite Lady Lampson, visited native *sooks* and bought trinkets just to show people that everything was quite all right. Her husband, Sir Miles, attended the races in Alexandria, and the back pages of English-language local newspapers carried their usual dull accounts of cricket, tennis, swimming, and horse-racing events.

At Heliopolis, the morning the first of the American évacués were en route to the airport, boys rolled out the cricket pitch. Reuter's bulletin in the morning edition comforted the

refugees with word that the Dodgers and Yanks led their leagues.

Cairo's night life remained unaffected throughout the critical days. What panic there was seemed to recede each evening with sunset. People dined, wined, danced, and only occasional air-raid alerts reminded them of war. They danced on the Continental Roof while men died less than a hundred miles away, and it was shocking until you rationalized it all by admitting there was nothing else these people could do.

One "crisis night" I dined well with friends at the Mohamed Ali Club. There was consommé gelé, sole meunière, poulet en casserole. We had strawberries and cream, black coffee, and fragile little cakes. The moselle was well chilled, the burgundy blood-warm, and the champagne cold enough to split stone.

The Americans took their flight from Cairo seriously. It did some of them lots of good. It made them aware there was a war, an enormous and important war, going on. Until they had been tagged, weighed, and ordered about, they hadn't realized it. They were quiet and serious as they strained for a last look at the irregular splotch of buildings that the city made beside the Nile. By the time they landed at Luxor they had relaxed considerably.

After being mauled about in the rough air over sands which had begun to warm up under the morning sun they began feeling that perhaps the whole business had been unnecessary. The same people who had clamored for seats on a plane were saying they had been stampeded, but when you asked them who had stampeded them they didn't know. Then they became refugees again, slightly bewildered and definitely unhappy people. Hitler had acquired several hundred positive enemies—those he chased out of Cairo.

The Fourth of July in Khartoum was very dull.

CHAPTER XIII

Why the British Nearly Lost Egypt

IN KHARTOUM, where the Blue Nile joins the White and where Chinese Gordon lost his head at one swipe from the broad sword of a turbaned Sudanese as he stood, saber in hand, at the top of his palace stairs rallying his guard to meet the treacherous attack, I had time for reflection. It was Independence Day, and I lounged on the hot terrace of the Grand Hotel in open shirt and shorts and wondered what my sons and their mother were doing back home, whether they'd been able to escape the heat of Bronxville. Heat? Lieutenant Commander Rockwell, U.S.N., his aide, and I ordered another drink. The palms were dusty and still. The Nile moved soundlessly northward a stone's throw distant. Hot blasts of air slapped us and we tried not to be aware. Here, on the flat, stony plain of Omdurman within sight of this same imperturbable Nile, the Twenty-first Lancers—"Never Shall Their Glory Fade"—held their silly squares against the Fuzzy-Wuzzies in '98. Here Winston Churchill cut his soldier-journalist teeth.

I thought of those squares, could almost see in the shimmering heat waves that rose off the Nile's barren bank those heavily laden redcoats with pipeclayed white breeches and their tall, heavy hats. Almost without being conscious of the swift transition my thoughts turned to what was occurring in the north, one thousand miles away, in the desert west and south of Alexandria where another British general, Claude

Auchinleck, rallied his guard in an eleventh-hour effort to halt what was then still a powerful, imaginative, ruthless enemy, and throw him back into Libya whence he had come five short, hot, woe-filled weeks before. British arms and honor were being tried up there as they never were at Omdurman. What rankled in my heart and in the soul of every newspaperman not completely a fool was that the tragedy which had brought Rommel almost literally to the gates of Alexandria could have been averted, the lives of tens of thousands of men saved, and many hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of weapons and matériel spared.

The difficulties we all had in attempting to tell the true story of what happened in that retreat convinced me that the American people and the people of England never learned the facts. I feel compelled, in the interest of truth and in the hope that the facts will help you to understand the story of the battle of North Africa, to set down here what happened between May 24 and June 29, 1942. What occurred in those thirty-seven days from the beginning of the battle of Knightsbridge until battle was joined at Tel El Eisa and El Alamein profoundly influenced the decision to send an American force into North Africa last November. I believe you should know the facts, the better to comprehend the enormity of the burden which rests upon American shoulders in this theater of warfare.

You will recall, perhaps, that General Ritchie's winter campaign of 1941-42 had flowed westward from Sollum across the scarped deserts of Cyrenaica deep into Libya, beyond Benghazi. It lost its impetus and ebbed back to Gazala. That forward surge had exhausted Ritchie's army and the gallant Eighth dug in along a line extending southward from Gazala to Bir Hacheim. Men rested and repaired their weapons, and reinforcements were moved up to them.

The enemy's panzers, motorized brigades, and Fascist infantry, however, were also battle-weary. They, too, halted after rolling back the Allied wave, to refit and reorganize.

But they had at least one advantage. They were close to their supply bases and could receive new equipment and fresh troops over the short route across the Mediterranean. It required only some forty-eight hours for a new tank to reach the Afrika Korps from the German supply depots in Sicily and Italy.

Troop transports could cross from Naples to Tripoli in one overnight dash through the British patrols. But, then, it was still at least a six weeks' journey from Democracy's arsenals to Democracy's African battle front. Rommel, therefore, won the desperate race for time, and on the night of May 24, while non-combatant journalists expertized in England and the United States concerning the impossibility of fighting in the desert in the summer heat, the Afrika Korps struck at the Allied defenses at least two, perhaps three weeks before Ritchie might have been able to resume the offensive.

Throughout the early spring the Western Desert's silence had been broken only by the sounds of picks and shovels and dynamite as the sappers clawed and blasted the reluctant rock and sand of that hateful land to create a defensive line facing the enemy from Gazala to Bir Hacheim. Upon the Gazala escarpment, a promontory rising some 800 feet above sea level, engineers holed out artillery pits and tank traps and reamed dugouts from the lifeless bluffs where not even camel thorn grows. Between Gazala and Bir Hacheim our Allies laid irregular areas of mines on flat land from where the rough escarpment ends to where the desert resumes.

Just east of these mine fields, at a point where two almost indistinguishable trails met, on terrain as smooth as a sow's belly, sappers drove a stake and nailed to it a sign reading: "Knightsbridge." They built there what is euphemistically called in desert warfare a "strong point." They boxed in the region of this spurious Knightsbridge with mine areas. They surrounded Bir Hacheim with mine areas also, leaving only a narrow gap for the entry of supplies and reinforcements.

Similar "strong points" were established at Acroma, along the coast road between Gazala and Tobruk and south of Acroma at El Adem. I've already hinted, in a previous chapter, how "strong" those "points" proved later to be. But the Knightsbridge box was the principal defense point of the Allied line which was anchored, in the north, by the late General Daniel Pienaar's First South African Division and at the southern extremity by the brilliant General Koenig's Fighting Frenchmen.

While the Western Desert remained cupped in a silence rarely disturbed by the customary coughing of machine guns and the burst of grenades and the din of clashing patrols, Ritchie continued the Eighth's rest. He pulled out many men for rest. Too many. Too many officers, also, were sent to the rear on leave. More tanks than necessary were withdrawn for repairs, and all along the line, men settled down into almost comfortable defensive positions and into a completely too-comfortable defensive state of mind. Men and officers, with the Luftwaffe seldom in the air and our own planes only rarely disturbing the quiet desert skies, believed themselves safe behind and within their little parallelograms of mine fields. I thought of the Fuzzy-Wuzzies and the squares of the Lancers and of the Grenadiers of 1843. The "line" from Gazala to Bir Hacheim begged comparison with the Maginot Line, militarily and spiritually.

The Gazala end was referred to as "Pienaar's Line" although Old Danny knew its weaknesses. He had few guns, a handful of tanks—one day when he needed tanks desperately the machines which had been assigned to him were delayed in Cairo to parade in the celebration of the birthday of a British duke—and barely enough armored vehicles to maintain effective patrols beyond his cleverly concealed observation posts and machine-gun emplacements guarding the approaches to his table-topped stronghold.

And yet, as we shall see, there was an abundance of

weapons of all categories. In the rear areas, as I described in an earlier chapter, there was order and a plenitude of supplies and, for a change, what seemed to be a new sense of the importance of logistics. We had quantitative equality and superiority in most departments. We did not possess, alas, qualitative equality and, much less, qualitative superiority in any category—particularly in generalship.

What guns Old Danny, he of the big ears and honest mien, possessed at the moment the enemy attacked were principally Italian weapons. He had captured them and had quietly ignored the order to turn them in to the ordnance department for "study." "Hell," said Pienaar, "you don't win battles by studying guns but by shooting them." In defiance of all regulations he held onto his captured guns and captured ammunition.

Old Danny didn't like those defensive "boxes." Mine fields, he explained to me, are all right if you can keep them under artillery fire when the enemy runs onto them. Otherwise, he said, the enemy engineers move into your mine fields with magnetic locators, lift up the mines, cart them away in wheelbarrows or on their backs, or just toss them aside and open the way for the tanks. Which was what Rommel did.

Rommel's sappers hacked two gaps in the mine fields protecting Knightsbridge. Large forces of panzer elements blew a bulge in the British line that rapidly assumed the shape of a big-bellied teapot. Southwest of Bir Hacheim, lightly held by some 5,000 Frenchmen, the enemy opened a third lane. For a few days it looked as though most of Rommel's Fifteenth and Twenty-first panzer divisions were trapped within the bulge where they were being pounded by British armored units employing British and American tanks. But the British didn't have a gun to match the German 88-millimeter gun. Nor, frankly, did they seem to have the skill of the Germans.

Once British tanks blundered onto what they thought were enemy tanks but which turned out to be cleverly concealed

German 88s. British officers sought to slug it out with their Grants, which were armed with a 75-millimeter gun mounted on the right side, below the turret, and limited in its command of terrain. German tanks mounted their big guns in the turrets and covered a 360-degree range laterally and 180 degrees longitudinally. Rommel seldom gave the British an opportunity, moreover, of tank-to-tank fighting. Whenever such melees did occur, in spite of handicaps in the design of their equipment, the British gave an excellent account of themselves. The enemy used his tanks against our soft-skinned stuff, armored cars and motor transport. His tanks continuously attacked our flanks and even came in behind us.

That's what Rommel did at Gazala and at Bir Hacheim. The tactics employed by the commander of the Afrika Korps were almost identical with those executed by his colleagues in France when they flanked the Maginot Line at both ends. He threw Italian divisions, the Trento and part of the Sabrata, against Bir Hacheim. He hurled Stukas at the besieged Frenchmen (they were soon practically cut off from supplies) and bombed and strafed the positions until Koenig was obliged to withdraw. That any Frenchmen survived the assaults was a small military miracle. Koenig managed to fight his way out, however, with about 50 per cent of his motor transport intact loaded with some 75 per cent of his men. He managed to save about one third of his 75s, old French guns salvaged from the Syrian campaign of the previous year. These were the only cannon Koenig had. When he exhausted his small supply of French ammunition for these guns he had to withdraw from the battle or be annihilated. His was a truly brilliant strategic withdrawal, a word which had fallen into disrepute in the desert.

The fall of Bir Hacheim ended the first phase of Rommel's offensive and he leaped at once into the second phase. This was to oblige Pienaar to pull out of Gazala. The Italians and Germans turned Bir Hacheim, moved behind the British posi-

tions at Knightsbridge, and tore northward to cut the Gazala-Tobruk road. Pienaar managed to withdraw with negligible losses. While the lines of British movement converged eastward and we were in full retreat we were comforted nightly by suave broadcasts from London. At field radios in camp or in the officers' mess, or wherever sundown found us, we heard the dulcet tones of the BBC announcer assuring us that we were, really, winning instead of losing. Perhaps it was not quite that bad, but it was bad enough. The desperate night we learned of Tobruk's fall, for instance, we heard London broadcasting that the town was still resisting. London maintained the fiction for another two days. In the noise of racing motors and clattering, beaten vehicles it was almost too much to need to listen to the unctuous blather from London. We gave up listening to the radio and concentrated all our faculties upon getting away from an enemy intent upon overtaking us and destroying us. I hope that I shall never again know the humiliation of retreat. I know many Britons who feel as I do. When Tobruk fell—why it fell was not clear to us at the moment—we knew the life of Egypt, the western approach to India, and the oil of the Middle East lay within Germany's reach. We prayed for a miracle and bounced along eastward toward Alexandria, the dust of the desert swirling into our trucks, raising an almost impenetrable, lung-stinging fog in which figures and guns and tanks and vehicles moved as though in a nightmare that would never end.

Jolting along in our truck we tried to rationalize the fall of Tobruk. The known evidence was this: General Klopper had been ordered to hold the town at any cost. Winston Churchill was in Washington talking to Congress and President Roosevelt about the British in Egypt. But Klopper had only 10,000 men comprising the Second South African Division and a few odds and ends of Guardsmen and others totaling perhaps a brigade and a regiment of British and Indian

troops. At the very least he had 13,500 men, at the very most 17,000—in either case not a formidable garrison. There were some 5,000 additional men billeted in the town, but these were mostly troops who had seen considerable action and were resting, recuperating from wounds and not in condition for serious fighting.

Klopper had little transport and a few tanks, perhaps seventy, of which only a small percentage were battleworthy. The perimeter defenses of the town were not well manned and had taken such a bad battering from the air and from enemy artillery that they could not be counted upon to hold the enemy very long. The reports we were given as to the quantity of supplies he had within the town were contradictory. When in the field, intelligence officers told us Tobruk would not be held, they admitted Klopper had only a few days' supplies and that, with the Royal Navy swept out of the Mediterranean, it would be impossible to send Klopper more. A few days later we were told Tobruk *would* be defended. Simultaneously we were informed Klopper had three months' supplies on hand. Much later we discovered the truth. Klopper was sent supplies, but the convoy failed to reach Tobruk. It returned to Alexandria, balked by enemy sea and air action.

Klopper himself was an expert guerrilla fighter and not a sieger. He was not a Baden-Powell, who held Mafeking for one hundred days. He might, at best, have been a De Wet. Whatever he was, however, he was not a traitor, as many have charged. Immediately Tobruk fell on the late afternoon of June 20—its fall was not officially announced for seventy-two hours—rumors spread that Klopper had quit. The rumor-mongers implied heavy-handedly that Klopper's Dutch ancestry influenced his surrender. They accused him of having “sold out.” I don't believe this. I believe that Klopper was the victim of an impossible politico-military situation. Against the

political necessity of holding Tobruk, Klopper was obliged to weigh the value of some thousands of lives. Had he had weapons with which to fight; had he some assurance that weapons could be brought to him, I believe he would have resisted. But he had neither guns nor the reasonable expectation of receiving any. And he surrendered.

I cannot entirely overlook, however, South African lack of sympathy with the leadership and staff work of the Eighth Army. Undoubtedly Klopper's lack of confidence in General Ritchie played a part in his decision. When Rommel captured Tobruk he seized at once his victory's obvious propaganda values. He addressed the South Africans at a review and told them, perhaps not altogether inaccurately, that they were fine troops—"fine men led by goats."

As is common in such military tragedies, men and officers cast about for someone to blame. Surprising as it might seem, the blameworthy one was not felt to be General Auchinleck, for whom all had great sympathy and respect. But men and officers were brutally frank in their excoriations of some of Auchinleck's officers and of Churchill himself. I am personally convinced that Churchill, despite his great genius, could not have survived total defeat in Egypt. The political and strategic courage which caused Auchinleck, the Middle East commander at the time, to take the field, retreat for some hundreds of miles, and make a stand at El Alamein, saved Churchill as much as those qualities saved Egypt. Auchinleck, as we shall see, was materially aided by American airplanes, but he was principally supported by his own unquestionable integrity as an officer and as a man. This is probably why the Auk was not broken but relieved of his command to fight again another day elsewhere. I would not be surprised to see him turn up on a new front in command of a new and even greater enterprise than the Egyptian one. He is a young man, young

enough to learn by experience, and as he stood in the path of the British retreat from Gazala, a rock in a swift, back-flowing stream, he must have learned much. Nonetheless, Churchill needed a goat, and the Auk was it, as Wavell had been, following the debacles in Greece and Crete the year before.

Rancor against Churchill was rife in the Middle East by the end of June. Churchill responded quickly.

Three British generals figuratively lost their heads for their responsibility in the military debacle which preceded Auchinleck's stand at the gate to Egypt. They were General Neil Ritchie, commander of the battered Eighth Army; Lieutenant General Willoughby Norrie, commander of the Thirtieth Corps, and Major General William Messervy, commander of the Seventh Armored Division.

Other military heads fell, for the story of ineptitude and all-around bungling of the defense of Egypt was one certain to arouse the white-hot anger of Englishmen at home. It was such a story of laziness and incompetence and of misuse of weapons superior both in quantity and quality to those of the enemy that not even the defeat of General Rommel's Afrika Korps could expunge the guilt of certain men.

Englishmen who had borne hardships cheerfully, doggedly, heroically for three years wanted to know, for instance, why it was that Major General "Strafer" Gott, avowedly the best tank commander of the Auk's staff, was given command of the infantry until Rommel had pounded his way to within seventy miles of Alexandria, before being returned to the tanks, while traditionalist cavalrymen or artillerymen, who didn't even know how to drive a car, let alone a tank, commanded Britain's armor in the field. Gott was killed, later, in an air crash. He died en route to Cairo to relieve the Auk of his command.

Brigadier generals and other high-ranking British officers with whom I talked in Cairo blamed Churchill. They said

he named the generals, ordered the movements of troops, and otherwise commanded the British armies. They were outspoken in their criticism of Churchill as a man who considers himself "God's gift to tacticians," and, they added, "he's nothing of the sort." Their loyalty to the Prime Minister was as unquestionable as their recognition of his great talents as a writer, an author, a statesman, and a politician. But they prefaced their opinions of Churchill the tactician with the remark, "Remember Gallipoli." He has the laugh on these critics now. Winston's fabulous luck held. Egypt was saved. But the Prime Minister came close to political disaster in June 1942.

Dissatisfaction seeped down through colonels, majors, and captains to the troops. There were cheers from common privates and NCOs when word reached Cairo and the Western Desert that General Wavell might replace Churchill as Defense Minister in the British Cabinet. They love Wavell in the desert. But it is unlikely that Wavell will ever enter the Cabinet while Winnie rules it. He cannot wish to duplicate David Lloyd George's difficulties with the popular General Haig. I had it from a person very close to Churchill that the Prime Minister would "step down" if any movement to make Wavell Defense Minister or commander in chief of the Armed Forces succeeded.

All that is only part of the shocking story of the collapse of the British in Egypt during Rommel's attempt to reach Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez. I intend to tell it all as I learned it. I risked my life to obtain the facts I am setting down here. British and American censorship combined to prevent me from writing the whole story at the time. British journalists, too, have sought to reach the people of England with the facts, for they, like American newspapermen, know that the war can be won and must be won, and that it won't be if those guilty of boondoggling are permitted to waste the money and sweat that weapons cost and if able soldiers are to be hamstrung.

Although some of us were obliged to write, from Cairo, that the defeats suffered by the British at Knightsbridge, Tobruk, El Adem, and then, in the second phase of the battle for Egypt, at Mersa Matruh and eastward up to El Alamein, were due to lack of men, weapons, and equipment, our dispatches did not completely coincide with the truth. General Ritchie had at his disposal more than 1,500 tanks, including nearly four hundred American General Grants.

He disposed of nearly fifty regiments of 25-pounder guns, nearly 1,000 weapons. He had almost 900 anti-tank guns. He had about 2,000 airplanes, among them plenty of American bombers and a large proportion of American fighters. He had automatic weapons in quantity, of every description, and plenty of food and plenty of ammunition. At Fort Capuzzo alone there were rations for 1,000,000 men for a day, for an army of 100,000 for ten days. I saw them burn it, watched them save only the beer, saw rum broached. They had small arms, Tommy guns (made in the United States of America), and other weapons in a dump near a NAAFI (armed forces' canteen service) depot. Soldiers loaded the available beer onto waiting trucks. They left the weapons to the enemy.

The abandonment of crippled tanks to the enemy, the capture by the Hun of trucks and other vehicles left in Tobruk and elsewhere, gave rise to one of the ugliest aspects of the Rommel romp over the Eighth Army of General Ritchie. And thus was increased friction between British and American officers. In the general dissatisfaction some of the American officers in Egypt lost their perspective and their poise. They forgot that until Pearl Harbor shoved us into the war Englishmen died while we merely cheered, and that if Britons hadn't held the enemy at bay for two years and three months, from September 1939 until December 1941, we might never have survived the Axis' attack. Proud Britons, humiliated at what was happening to them, forgot the aid they've received from those

who toiled at lathes and benches in America to supply them with the planes they sent over Berlin, the tanks they threw against Rommel.

So with his rapid push Rommel not only thrust a sword at Egypt's heart but also a wedge between Britons and Americans and widened a wound that time and a common effort and blood spilled on a common battlefield might have healed. To those of us who'd seen American workers in the factories at home and had known their sacrifices and who'd seen men die in England and on the thirsty sands of Libya for the same objective, victory over Nazism and Fascism, what we witnessed in Cairo was degrading, and filled us with a sense of futility.

Most of us remained as long as possible at the front where, in spite of everything—despite retreats and incredible losses in men and equipment—there was no defeatism. Up there we were always accepted and treated as comrades in arms, and we discussed dispassionately each phase of the battle as it unfolded, cursing together the heat, the inevitable bully beef, and the bitter water. But in Cairo we had to stand crowded in the press room of Middle East GHQ and listen to evasions and half truths from a press officer who simpered and giggled and repeated, monotonously, the inane phrase . . . “the battle, gentlemen, is fluid, covering a wide area, and nothing is known . . .” He kept up that kind of nonsense for two days after we knew—for we were there when it happened—that Tobruk had fallen.

By his evasions the press officer in Cairo denied Democratic peoples the truth and, therefore, the weapons with which to bring pressure through Democratic practice upon those guilty of bungling. Moreover, by his insistence upon striking an optimistic note, he retarded the arrival in time of the planes and tanks and other equipment which might have driven Rommel back to Tripoli. Had the people of America and the people of England known the truth in time—and there was plenty of

time to save the situation between the day Knightsbridge fell and the day Rommel reached El Alamein—enough material could have been diverted from Russia, and sufficient quantities of planes and men could have been siphoned in out of India to have walloped the enemy. The people would have demanded it.

Instead we got lectures from General Dorman-Smith, deputy chief of staff and apologist for all the incompetents whose sole concern seemed to us to be to keep their jobs, their memberships in the Gezira Sporting Club, and their billets in Shepheard's Hotel and the Continental Savoy rather than to win the war. We dubbed those who swished about in smart uniforms in Cairo the "Gabardined Swine." The title originated with the "Desert Rats," the men who fought the war in the desert.

On one memorable occasion General Dorman-Smith, a stock-shelf old school tie officer, told the correspondents in Cairo that the reason the British couldn't beat Rommel lay in the fact that ". . . we are amateurs and they are professionals . . ." He was careful to point out that he was a professional. The chaps who were dying for Britain and Democracy's cause were just hams. But General Dorman-Smith failed to say that the officer who gave the order which sent four hundred tanks into an ambush of Nazi 88-millimeter guns wasn't an amateur. Eighty tanks escaped that bungle. It wasn't an amateur who failed to man the perimeter defenses of Tobruk and have them ready, as they were in April 1941 when they repelled repeated enemy attacks.

Amateurs were *not* responsible for Rommel's successful escape out of the Knightsbridge box in the early days of the campaign. Rommel was bottled up. His panzers milled about inside the mine fields the British had laid all around him. Had British armor attacked him as Rommel withdrew, the Libyan campaign would have ended then and there. Instead he had *thirty-six hours'* time in which to escape. It would have taken

the available British armored division, the Seventh, less than two hours to take the necessary battle positions had they received orders in time.

Amateurs were not responsible for the decimation of a crack Scottish regiment by enemy tanks. It was a professional soldier who gave the order which caused an anti-tank artillery regiment to flee from the spot and left the Scotsmen unprotected. General Dorman-Smith overlooked that one.

Dorman-Smith was typical of that class of officer with which GHQ, Middle East, is plagued. Auchinleck, himself an able and progressive commander, although perhaps not of the caliber and genius of Wavell, was burdened with the castoffs of the War Office. It is an acknowledged rule for an officer who makes himself insufferable in a British regiment to be sent to the War Office in London which, in turn, sends him to GHQ, Middle East.

Auchinleck, when he assumed command of the Middle East in July 1941, was aware of the kind of dunderheads who comprised the officers' roster in Cairo. He fired scores of them in blocks. Others he was obliged to retain. They cluttered his offices and they stymied some of his reforms. It took him from November 1941 until June 1942 to get his comfort-loving laddies out of their billets in Shepheard's and the Continental and luxurious flats, and into camp cots under canvas in the desert. For weeks he himself was the only officer without wife, apartment, and other impedimenta, living as a soldier should, in a tent.

Auchinleck, alive to the deficiencies of the army he took over, made many reforms. Some of them were insisted upon by Averell Harriman, President Roosevelt's trouble-shooter and now Lease-Lend Administrator in London. Harriman visited the Middle East last summer. He saw bad roads and low-quality mechanical aptitude on the part of boys from London slums. He urged Auchinleck to make improvements, and Auchinleck did.

But certain fundamental deficiencies which didn't exist when the Lancers fought at Omdurman, when Clive conquered India, when Wellington humbled Napoleon, Auchinleck couldn't overcome. A brigadier general friend of mine is the authority for the statement that his troops dawdled away valuable time when, with the enemy only a few thousand yards away, it was necessary to man picks and shovels and dig in. They waited, instead, for air-compressor rock drills which never arrived in time.

The Auk couldn't overcome the Tommy's tendency to "brew up" at the wrong time. The process of "brewing up" is that of making the inevitable tea on which, literally and figuratively, the British Army, the worst-fed army of all modern armies, marches. The Tommies pull out gasoline stoves, set upon them iron teapots, and brew a dark brown liquid they call tea. This they sometimes do within range of enemy guns at night with disastrous results. They do it morning, noon, afternoon, and night. But you can't blame them. They need the stimulus of tea on the diet of tinned beef and coarse, broken, old biscuit which keeps them alive.

There is a strong possibility, at least as strong as the tea the Tommies brew, that my brigadier friend, like Dorman-Smith, was passing the old buck. I personally have never seen a lazy Tommy, nor have I ever seen a Tommy "brew up" unless he needed that tea. Perhaps what the Auk wasn't able to overcome, principally, was the lack of imagination, and personal, private laziness of officers who deputize noncoms to carry out what should be their duties and who insist on batmen, or privates assigned to their personal service, to lay out their bedrolls at night and otherwise attend them as though they were holding Mayfair against a bombardment of roses instead of the Western Desert against Rommel. An appalling percentage of the rolling stock of trucks and vehicles the British Army needed in the desert was devoted to hauling officers and their incredibly large "kits" of bedrolls, blankets, campoots,

washbasins, bottles of whisky and soda, shaving lotion, boot polish, and forty other items.

The enemy got two hot, square meals a day, come hell or Spitfires, and had the resiliency and personal happiness essential in soldiers. The Tommy cooked his own scraggy meal over a gasoline stove or a camp fire, if he cooked at all. Usually he just opened a can, brewed his tea, gnawed the dog biscuit they call "biscuit." Sometimes the tins were from months to years over the makers' guarantee against spoilage. There's more wastage in the British Army than in any army in the world. Marmalade and cheese, for instance, are packed in foot-high tins. Half the contents, at least, is wasted from mold, sand, dirt, or ants, but the soldier's ration doesn't allow for mold, sand, dirt, or ants. Lacking the proper vitamins, the British Tommy suffers from night blindness in the desert.

British officers do not seem to practice Democracy. I saw a sergeant pilot turned out of an officers' mess in the Western Desert although he was accompanied by a squadron leader. That sergeant was the pilot of the squadron leader's plane and he wore the DSO over his heart. The squadron leader walked out with his pilot, furious at the discrimination against his pilot.

There is no braver, more enduring soldier than the Tommy. This I've seen proved innumerable times in Egypt and in England, as my colleagues attest was the case in Greece and Crete and in Syria. One American officer remarked that there is no soldier in the world with whom he'd rather fight, side by side, than the Englishman, but no officer he'd rather *not* serve under than the product of the British old school tie system.

Though the enemy controlled the Mediterranean—governed its skies and owned mastery of the North African ports—the Middle East was still to be saved. It had to be for a multitude of obvious reasons, two of which were: (1) maintenance of the life lines to Russia, whose resistance depended largely upon supplies from Britain and America. (2) To preserve the wealth

of oil that lies beneath the scabrous surface of Araby's deserts and mountains in Iraq and Iran.

But the Middle East was to be saved only by the arrival of American air power. Brain power was needed too. If war is geography in motion, in the Middle East you could feel and see geography move. And we were to roll up the geographical rug that Rommel rode on in his tanks, with him in it. I could not see this through the heat haze of Khartoum.

I could see, then, only impending disaster, loss of North Africa, and the delay or total postponement of the arrival of American troops in the Mediterranean. This alone I knew, for I had been so advised by every forward-looking, intelligent officer I encountered. Now I knew only a vague despair and the urgency of reaching Lourenço Marques ahead of Joe Grew.

CHAPTER XIV

In Which I Encounter the Herr Doktor

LUCK SMILED ON ME. On the morning of the sixth of July, two days after my arrival, I managed to obtain a seat on the BOAC flying boat to Lourenço Marques. I also learned that the exchange ships from the Orient would be delayed several days. I would have time to loiter in green, fragrant, comfortable Lourenço Marques. But my troubles hadn't altogether ended.

I had not had time to obtain a visa for Portuguese East Africa. This worried me somewhat. I was in a British uniform and would need to shuck it before I arrived in Lourenço Marques. Unarmed with a visa, I might have difficulty entering the Portuguese colony. Moreover, clothed in British khaki, I would certainly be interned. How to solve these problems occupied me every moment of the three-day flight to Lourenço Marques.

At Kisumu, on Lake Victoria, an Indian bartender dispelled my anticipations of a stinking Portuguese jail.

My bartender friend helped me obtain civilian clothing. This was half the battle. Attired as an American civilian, I would have difficulty enough entering Mozambique without a visa. Dressed as a British officer, I wouldn't have had a chance.

The Portuguese authorities in Washington, before I'd left for Africa, had made it clear they didn't want me in the col-

onies. I had offended someone with my comments on Portuguese colonials in a previous book or article. I believe the words of the Portuguese legation had been: "We don't want Mr. G. ever to set foot on Portuguese soil." I knew I must avoid any situation wherein the local authorities in East Africa would be obliged to cable their government in Lisbon and their representative in Washington for permission for me to enter Mozambique.

The civilian clothes helped. Frankly, had I been a Portuguese immigration officer in Mozambique I would have arrested the Mr. Frank Gervasi who presented himself on July 9 in an off-the-hook gabardine suit, check cotton shirt, and outrageous slave-trade necktie purchased the night before in an Indian bazaar by the light of an oil lantern. My bartender friend took me to the place. It was a long walk, uphill, through the blacked-out town. I remember waiting for what seemed an hour while he searched the native quarter for his storekeeper pal who finally appeared, sleepy-eyed but eager. It was an unforgettable suit, tight where it should have been loose and loose where it might have fitted better. The color of the cloth was a mustardy yellow-green. It had been made for no human figure. When I appeared, the next morning, aboard the plane, my fellow passengers had their first laugh since Rommel chased them southward for the duration.

At Lourenço Marques an astute representative of the BOAC, who had things well in hand down there and spent his off moments worrying whether PAA would or wouldn't drive his beloved air line out of business in Africa, secured for me a visa allowing me one month's stay in Portuguese East Africa.

I settled down in the Polana Hotel, bought two Palm Beach suits off the rack at John Orr's, the big British-owned department store in town, and prepared to study Portuguese East Africa. It wasn't long before I was typewriter deep in one of Africa's most interesting spy dramas. On the very first night

I dined at the Polana, resplendent in my new fawn-colored Palm Beach suit, I met Herr Doktor Werz face to face. I also encountered the Italian Consul General, but he, like the Italian general in command of Italian forces in Tripolitania (does anyone know his name?), didn't count.

Before I tell you about the amazing Herr Doktor Werz, I must tell you something about the geopolitical role of Mozambique in this war.

The Allied supply line from England and the United States to the battlefields of the Middle East, Russia, and India curves flatly around the Cape of Good Hope and passes through the relatively restricted waters of Mozambique Channel, between Madagascar and Portuguese East Africa. It is one of the safest supply routes connecting the factories of the United Nations with their war fronts and is really vulnerable only in those channel waters.

To protect this supply lane, the British seized Diégo-Suarez, and the Union of South Africa sent troops to help finish the job—that of occupying Madagascar and preventing the use of the island as an enemy base from which to harass United Nations' shipping in the channel and possibly attempt actual invasion of the African continent. But Madagascar is only half the problem. The other half is Portuguese East Africa itself.

Neutral Portugal's East African colony is, in a certain sense, an enemy base on the African continent. From there the enemy's spies and agents signal with impunity the movements of United Nations' ships to Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo. These Gestapo agents alienate Dutch and Greek seamen of United Nations' ships in Lourenço Marques, the colony's capital. There, one of the ablest of Germany's many agents, whose job on the African continent is comparable to that which Von Papen held in the Balkans or Grobba in the Middle East, transmits to Berlin information he accumulates from United Nations' territories. He provides Goebbels with ammunition

for his propaganda warfare against South Africa—but that is probably the least harmful of his operations.

Were the problem reversed—were Portuguese East Africa surrounded by German colonies instead of by British dominions, colonies, and territories—there is no doubt about how it would have been solved. The Germans would have just moved in. But the United Nations don't play that way. Portugal is neutral, and Portugal's neutrality in the United Nations' code must be respected. It doesn't matter that Herr Doktor Leopold Werz, nominally the German Vice-Consul in Lourenço Marques, actually is one of the slickest operatives of the Gestapo and violates the code daily.

A series of political and geographic circumstances combine to make Werz's job comparatively easy. In neutral territories, the advantages are all on the side of the Axis. All neutrals or pseudo-neutrals feel obliged to conform to their demands. Most of them have frontiers with Axis or Axis-dominated nations and fear invasion if they fail to conform.

Portugal is in a particularly bad spot, realizing that at the slightest provocation Spain, urged by Germany, would pounce upon her. Portuguese officers in Mozambique, fresh from home, told me they could not hold the Spaniards one week if a showdown came.

And if a showdown does come, Portugal's five-hundred-year-old empire, comprising territory which is twenty-five times the size of the motherland and including some of the richest colonies in Africa as well as strategically situated islands, would be at the mercy of the Axis, Britain, or the United States—whatever got there first. Portugal's enormous and wealthy empire, which has survived longer than any other and which has escaped the imperial reshuffles of the past hundred and fifty years, thanks to the protection of the mighty British Fleet, might become one of Africa's empires adrift.

Fear of losing her empire, the fundamental sympathy for

Fascism inherent in her own corporativism, and the secret belief that the United Nations might not win the war partially explain Portugal's tacit collaboration with the Axis. These circumstances explain more particularly how Dr. Werz is able to obtain any amount of funds he requires from Portuguese banks.

It is the old aspirin trick which the Nazis worked so effectively in the Balkans. Germany obliges Portugal to purchase German drugs, shoddy hardware, and armaments (Germany recently offered to sell Portugal equipment for four armored divisions), and creates large balances of Portuguese money in Lisbon banks. Dr. Werz, 'way down in Lourenço Marques, can draw on these balances at will.

Portugal's pro-Fascism is not shared by the white population, and in the Mozambique colony the natives don't count. The colony, whose economic welfare depends largely upon South Africa and Rhodesia, is overwhelmingly pro-British and pro-United Nations. The people even resent their homeland's tendency to use Mozambique as a dumping ground for jobless politicians. They call functionaries sent from Portugal, who grab off all the fat jobs and leave little for the development of local leadership, *paracaidistas*—parachutists.

If Portugal ever is overrun by the enemy, it is reasonable to hope, according to the colony's leading citizens, that Mozambique would become the center of the Free Portugal movement just as some of the French colonies have become for the Free French.

None of this, however, obstructs Dr. Werz's work, for everywhere in Neutralia (that never-never land of "It can't happen here," which now includes only half a dozen of the world's fifty-odd nations) there are men who seek power through an Axis victory and there are others who can be bought and sold.

Even Mozambique is no exception. Dr. Werz knows how to

spend money. His agents spend considerable buying drinks for seamen in port. Lourenço Marques has become one of the most important ports on a continent which is sadly lacking in good harbors. A few months ago the cranes in Lourenço Marques lay idle with their arms folded and the fine landlocked harbor was empty except for a few coastwise vessels and an occasional ship from Lisbon. Now it is one of the busiest of the east coast ports, where United Nations' freighters call for bunkerage and chandloring and pick up cargoes railed from South Africa's Rand.

More than two million tons of shipping passed in and out of Lourenço Marques between January and June 1942, and the pace increased as the facilities of Cape Town and Durban were burdened beyond capacity. The docks are crowded with ships and the water-front honky-tonks and cafés with sailors. Among them are Greek and Dutch seamen whose families remain in occupied territories.

Seamen are worth their weight in guns these days, and Dr. Werz has developed a system for depriving us of a few. His agents circulate among the disconsolate ones who are wondering whether their families are dead or alive. They win the seamen's confidence and offer to obtain news of their friends' or relatives' welfare.

"Just give us names," they say, "and where you last knew them to be; we'll find out the rest."

Through the Gestapo in Berlin and in the occupied areas Dr. Werz obtains the "information" the seamen desire within as little as forty-eight hours. Whenever it is unfavorable, the message omits the ugly details. His agents meet the seamen and give them the information, always good news.

In return, Dr. Werz usually obtains the data he requires for what is probably the most important part of his work—naval intelligence. From sailors he can learn their ship's last port of call, tonnage, cargo, and possibly its destination.

From personal observation he can ascertain when ships leave

Lourenço Marques harbor. That part is easy. All he has to do is look out of his window in the Polana Hotel, which is on a bluff overlooking Delagoa Bay. He cables Berlin his composite, day-by-day picture of the comings and goings of ships. Berlin has a rapid means of communicating with U-boats and raiders operating in Mozambique Channel and in African waters.

That's not all. Seamen whom Dr. Werz has befriended are often influenced to quit their ships. Lourenço Marques is full of seamen on the beach, men who have been bribed and otherwise influenced by Dr. Werz to desert, or others who have been shipwrecked. Many of the ships sunk in Mozambique Channel have been ships which had sailed from Lourenço Marques.

It is a study in the macabre to watch a tall, heavy-legged Nordic with wavy blond hair, gray-blue eyes, and a petulant mouth sitting in the dining room of the Polana Hotel scanning the faces of ship captains who come in. They are awkwardly dressed in their newly bought store clothes, these survivors of sunken vessels who are sitting down to their first dinners after days in lifeboats or on rafts. At such moments Dr. Werz's features assume an almost feline smugness.

The transmission and reception involved in the above work constitute at least part of Dr. Werz's daily budget of telegrams. He has become the best client of the Portuguese state-controlled cable and wireless service out of Lourenço Marques.

Every day the German Vice-Consul sends his khaki-uniformed black flunky to the one-room office of Serviço dos Telégrafos with long telegrams addressed to the Reich's chancellery in Berlin containing sheafs of neatly typed figures which represent code groups. They are stamped with the eagle and swastika at the bottom.

The flunky lays as many as 24,000 escudo notes on the counter in payment for a single batch of telegrams, amounting to a thousand dollars at a clip. Dr. Werz's cable bills run as

much as \$15,000 monthly and he is known to have withdrawn from the Banco Ultramarino, the Portuguese colonial state bank, the equivalent of \$100,000 at one time.

In Mozambique the Nazis don't bother levying on some two hundred Germans who are residing in Lourenço Marques or the five hundred who own strategically scattered sisal plantations in the northern part of the colony near Porto Amelia or Mozambique City—the region bordering the old German colonies.

The amounts Dr. Werz spends for cables represent an enormous budget of what censors call "information valuable to the enemy." He certainly isn't filling his cables with accounts of the life and times of Lourenço Marques, for this city, charming capital of Portugal's plum colony though it is, isn't exactly a world metropolis.

It's a busy week for the American Consul, for instance, when he sends or receives two official telegrams. Our Consul there, by the way, is a Buffalo boy named Austin Roe Preston. He is a grade-4 officer in a grade-8 post, who is handicapped by not being a consul general in a place where all nations except Japan maintain consul generals. He and his Australian-born wife, Marjorie, and their son, Austin, Jr., comprise the total American population of Mozambique.

Lourenço Marques, the half-port, half-resort setting of this African espionage drama (which would be more farce than drama if the consequences to the United Nations' war effort were less serious), is a dull little place despite the tourist-literature rhapsodies about the city's silvery nights and golden days. Here some 14,000 people of Portuguese extraction, about 3,000 other Europeans, 29,000 natives, and 5,000 unidentifiables live dull little lives, with two movies, two so-called night clubs, one mediocre hotel, and one terrible golf course. But so far nobody has done anything about Werz.

A few English people amuse themselves by plotting Edgar Wallace schemes to rub him out, but Werz carries on undis-

turbed—if anything, relishing the notoriety he has acquired. He knows people indulge in backhand gossip about him and if he isn't the local chief of the Gestapo he gives an admirable impersonation of one. He bows affably to the Portuguese and does everything possible to ingratiate himself with them; he entertains them and flatters them. He's no superman, but something of a sissy.

Werz has developed a persecution complex. Once he fainted in his bathtub. After the room boy had saved him from drowning, he swore he had been assaulted by British agents. When he fainted again at the dinner table, he asserted later that he had been poisoned by his enemies. He hasn't any privacy, not even on the beach where he likes to stroll with his mistress. Lourenço Marques is a house without walls. It is a city where the Europeans live within the few square feet of the Polana Hotel's dining room, lounge, and lobby. You need only dine there once or twice to know which husbands and wives play around, who's got money in the bank and who hasn't, and that Werz has a Portuguese mistress. She is Mozambique's most beautiful woman, with an oval face, sleek black hair, luminous brown eyes, and a good figure.

Werz is a young man in his middle thirties, who came to Lourenço Marques after being bounced out of Pretoria when South Africa entered the war. There are those who suspect the obstructionist Ossewabrandwag, one of South Africa's anti-war groups, of being linked with Werz.

There is no doubt, however, that Werz, in his expensive cables, feeds Berlin news originating in the Union, in Rhodesia, and probably as far north as Cairo. Standing as he does on the flank of the Allies' important supply line and along the British air-line route from the Cape to Cairo, he is bound to come across plenty of material useful to Berlin. He'd be useful, if only for the accounts he gets from Johannesburg and other South African newspapers concerning internal conditions of the country. His opportunities for effective espionage are too

numerous to be overlooked by the wary and wily enemy, and Germany has proved she doesn't miss any opportunities.

It is reasonable to suppose that Werz operates as effectively from Mozambique as the Nazi Dietrich did from Mexico City, as the German agents did from Rio de Janeiro before Brazil entered the war and as they continue to do from Buenos Aires.

If anything, Werz's presence near the borders of the Union of South Africa, the most important nation on the continent whose contribution to the war effort proportionately ranks her with Great Britain and the United States, is more dangerous than the presence of Dietrich and others elsewhere earlier in the war.

It is the same old ugly story of a friendly nation—in this case a friendly colony—harboring an enemy agent for whom the rules of international law mean only protection for carrying on his war.

Mozambique, by the way, is potentially one of the richest tidbits in Africa, with gold, manganese, tin, copper, and coal in its innards. Its healthy plains can grow corn, its marshes rice, its jungles rubber, quinine, and tanbark. In the minds of many Portuguese loyal to Democratic principles there is some doubt about Germany's aspirations concerning Mozambique, but there can't be any in the shrewd mind of South Africa's premier Jan Christiaan Smuts.

Smuts, who envisions a postwar federation of African states south of the equator, is perhaps thinking long thoughts about Mozambique. Of all the men of this war, he is the one most likely to come up with the solution to the problem of Mozambique and the problem of Herr Doktor Werz.

CHAPTER XV

Hell Ships from the Orient

HAD IT NOT BEEN for Malcolm Muggeridge the wait in Lourenço Marques would have been unbearable. Malcolm is an English historian, a lathy, tweedy, gentle man whose mildness is limited to his manner and voice. He has merry blue eyes and unkempt blond hair which is graying rapidly, and a large, expressive mouth. His hands are long, bony, and nervous, and his is one of the most active, incisive minds I've ever encountered. We became friends at once after meeting, inevitably, in the crowded Polana Hotel lobby over coffee and liqueurs. I hope we shall so remain as long as we live.

London sent him down on a propaganda mission. Lourenço Marques needed him desperately. Until his arrival the Axis had rather much its own way in the matter of propaganda, with the Deutsches Machrichten Bureau and the Agenzia Stefani operating full-time, lie-dispensing bureaus on the main street of the town, near John Orr's department store.

Within a few weeks of his arrival, however, Malcolm had a wide acquaintance among the clergy and politicians of the colony. He was well liked and respected, and, more important, was trusted as a source of information concerning the conduct of the war. Malcolm never made the mistake of glossing over British retreats or defeats. Instead, he explained them and stressed in his conversations with the Portuguese intelligentsia the aims of Britain and America—their desire to free the world of the miasma of Nazi-Fascism so that peoples everywhere

might choose for themselves their own freely separate ways of life. He knew Portuguese perfectly, as he knew French. His accomplishments were such, in fact, as to cause me to wish we might choose our representatives abroad with the same obvious care with which this scholarly yet human Briton had been chosen for his task.

Malcolm and I had long talks. We met almost daily for luncheon, tea at his office, or for dinner. One afternoon we played tennis at the home of the British Consul General. In the party were the Consul General's wife, who swung a mean racket, Mr. and Mrs. Preston, and the two Swiss official observers who were en route to Tokyo to represent the United States and Great Britain there. One of them was a handsome young man named Bossi, of Italo-Swiss extraction. He did not look forward to war years in Tokyo where any white man would be hated or, at least, made to feel that his presence was odious.

I had not played tennis for years, not since leaving Rome, where I went regularly (during the years I held the International News Service post there from 1935 until April of 1939) to the Tennis Club for a set or two each day. I was never a good player, and I knew my long layoff from sports of any kind would make me a poor partner indeed for the Britons and the American Consul and his Australian wife. She, like the British Consul General's lady, played a hard, aggressive game. But I played anyhow, and I learned that afternoon the difference in the approach to competitive sport of the various nationalities present.

The English played to win, but without bitterness over poorly executed shots. The Americans, on the other hand, wanted and contested every point. Mrs. Preston, the Australian, was, I am sure, much put out that I dubbed many volleys and repeatedly double-faulted as I strove to get the range early in the play and, later, as I tired. She was demonstrative, inclined to scream decently when she erred, while

our English opponents were full of "bad luck, old boy," or "too bad, Mrs. Preston." The Swiss, the handsome Bossi, played for style. It did not matter very much whether his shots were in or out. What did matter to him was that he had made his shots come off dramatically.

His partner, the other Swiss, of German extraction, played clumsily, vigorously, silently, and reasonably well. Malcolm and I sat on the side lines toward the end of the play and watched the others and compared our observations. His jibed pretty well with mine and we half seriously drew parallels between the kinds of tennis we played and the manner of our separate politics and methods of fighting a war!

Malcolm helped me escape from the scores of tourists who cluttered up Lourenço Marques. They were, for the most part, bourgeois pleasure seekers from South Africa who would normally be summering in Europe or in England but were confined, now, the poor dears, to the dull life of Lourenço Marques where they ate, sunned, bathed, ate, went inland up the near-by river to see the hippo and the crocs, and ate and drank and slept.

They had their automobiles and, usually, their servants, and the war was far, far away. A few of those who had managed to find accommodations in the Polana were refugees. Some had waited many months for visas to proceed to the Union of South Africa or to America.

One, a man of modest means, was there with his blond, attractive wife and child. They had been in Lourenço Marques for some months. He went daily to the British air ways company's office to see about his "priorities" for Cairo and Jerusalem. He was advised that *his* priority had been granted, but there were none for his wife and their child. He could not leave, of course, without them, and every day the same little tragedy in the office of the BOAC was repeated.

"No sir, sorry, sir, but the priorities for Madam and the little boy have not yet arrived."

I believe they are still there, waiting to go to the Promised Land after having escaped from Germany via France, Spain, and Portugal, where they had boarded a steamer in Lisbon for Lourenço Marques.

Malcolm, although a Liberal, was disinclined to consider Russia and the Soviets' remarkable military feats against the Germans as the chief political determinant in the war and the peace to come. We had, therefore, some hearty but good-natured debates. Many times these began at the dinner table and ended in the lobby at coffee time. Often, we thought, we saw Werz and his Italian sycophant smile at the heat of our arguments. These gentlemen could, of course, without great effort hear every word we said.

Malcolm Muggeridge's history of the ten years from 1930 to 1940 should be required reading for every student of contemporary international affairs. Although at times cynical to a painful extremity, it is, nevertheless, a sound and an honest book which gives a more accurate picture of why war came than any book I know. And British imperialism doesn't come out of Malcolm's milling with any patina of glory but, rather, with a black eye or two.

The Japs arrived first. They came aboard the Swedish liner *Gripsholm* one sunlit morning—1,560 of them, including those characters Kurusu and Nomura. They'd been caught in the United States, Canada, and South America by their own war lords' infamy. They sailed into the tidy little seaport town where the jacaranda trees bloomed and the bougainvillaea spilled in purple profusion over whitewashed garden walls; they polluted the place for two days until the Americans and a few Britons came.

They were to be exchanged for an equal number of Americans, some Canadians, and a few South Americans coming in from Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, and Bangkok.

They themselves came from White Sulphur Springs with all their luggage, with sewing machines, golf bags, grand pianos, radios, some automobiles, and their pockets stuffed with dollars.

Two days later the Americans arrived. They hadn't known the comforts of a White Sulphur Springs hotel. Some hadn't had what you could call a bath in seven months. They'd known only prisons, concentration camps, and the attendant privations and indignities. Their luggage, when they had any at all, usually consisted of one bag smuggled out to them before leaving by faithful servants. Most of them had only the clothes they stood in, and they had little or no money.

For days before the *Gripsholm* arrived to keep her rendezvous with the *Conte Verde* and *Asama Maru* in this odd corner of the world where Japs and Americans might meet without the compulsion of slaughter, we'd been warned that censorship would not abide the stories our refugees might tell of rape, murder, and maltreatment.

It was tiresomely reiterated by everyone connected with what is known in international law as a diplomatic exchange that newspapermen's dispatches from Lourenço Marques would be strictly censored by the neutral Portuguese authorities and by censors at home. This would be done, we were told, to preserve the neutrality of Portugal and to avoid offending Tokyo, so that the British remaining in the Orient and the Americans left in Manila and elsewhere would be permitted to be exchanged for Japs from America and the British Isles.

Censorship would be applied, we were told, so as to prevent further maltreatment of our nationals held in Japanese-conquered areas—to which the Americans, when they arrived, emitted one long, loud, eloquent razzberry. Nothing, they said, would prevent Japs from slapping British faces, from spitting into all white men's faces, from looting the personal

property of civilians, and from otherwise showing off the cultural, political, and economic advantages to Asia of Japanese supremacy.

The first word to the Consul and to newspapermen aboard the enemy mercy ships as to how they should conduct themselves came from Secretary Hull in a brief cable which said that only the heads of missions—senior diplomats—should make any statements to the press. Whereupon newspapermen who had lived for months with the biggest story of their lives, who had existed only for the day when they might reach a neutral cable office and tell the world what it means to live under Japan's "Imperial way" or "eight corners under heaven," threw up their hands and yelled, "Who are we fighting anyhow?"

Those first two days ashore were a nightmare for American newspapermen. They had come out of prison and concentration camps; they had been browbeaten into writing pro-Japanese propaganda; one of them—an Associated Press correspondent—had had two teeth knocked out by a Jap guard who insisted upon extending to journalists the opportunity of telling the world through the Japanese press and radio how well treated they had been during their imprisonment. And now they couldn't tell their stories!

For one thing, Japanese newspapermen, diplomats, and civilians had loaded the local radio and cable facilities with messages to Tokyo and other Axis capitals, reporting everything from "Dear Sukiyaki, Poppa's coming home. Love, Togo," to detailed coded political reports on the internal situation in America and Canada. The Japs, by the way, didn't have to tell about atrocities. They hadn't experienced any.

Those who saw Americans arriving and were able to compare their appearance with that of the Japs and could measure the quantity of baggage our nationals carried against what the Japs had been permitted to bring away, knew who had been maltreated and who hadn't. Some Americans were recovering

from beriberi and were barely able to shuffle about, due to malnutrition. They looked gaunt, haggard, hollow.

My friend Herman Scholtz of Louisville, Kentucky, whom I'd known in Bangkok, had lost twenty-seven pounds, his wife Mabel almost as much, and they had been reasonably well treated. I hardly recognized the strained, thin features of Richard Wilson, Manila United Press Bureau chief, who had been interned in Hong Kong when caught there on a flying visit just before the outbreak of war.

One man was removed from the ship with gangrenous feet. He'd been chained in a filthy cell. A month at sea with reasonably good food hadn't been enough to repair the damage of months of incarceration. Many had sores around their mouths, on their faces, hands, and arms.

The Japs all looked fat and sleek or healthily lean. They wore well-tailored American clothes of recognizable brands. They looked like Fifth Avenue and the Loop, while our people looked like Bowery bums. We didn't need eyewitness documentations to know that they hadn't been pampered by the Japanese police. It seems it was a sort of Jap super-Gestapo which did the rough stuff. They have power of life and death over even the highest Japanese generals and diplomats.

The several days during which Japs and Americans wandered the pleasant streets of Lourenço Marques, shopping and sightseeing, provided ample opportunity to study these three thousand victims of Jap Lebensraum. The Japs were almost as much victims as the Westerners. They did not look happy about going home. For most of them, Japan had changed considerably since they'd left. For others, it wasn't home at all. America was their home.

The Japs were a silent, almost universally downcast lot when their ship entered the harbor. There wasn't any welcome for them. It was a trick of the tide, but even the odd score of ships in the harbor—the Greek, Dutch, British, and American merchantmen which rode their anchors awaiting their turns

at the docks to take on fuel and water—had their backs to the incoming *Gripsholm*.

On hand to greet the *Gripsholm* when she swung to the side of the dock were only the Italo-German consul generals, two Swiss diplomats, handsome, suave Senhor Lavoruiho, Portuguese Foreign Office official, who had come down from Lisbon to see that the exchange went off smoothly, four reporters from the Union of South Africa, and a twittery dame who does the chatter column for the local rag.

Port life continued as if it was an everyday occurrence for a big white liner to enter the harbor—a liner with the words “Diplomat Gripsholm Sverige” painted hugely on her sides and the broad blue-and-yellow stripes of Sweden painted on her bow, hull, and superstructure. The *Gripsholm*’s welcomeless arrival would have been infinitely sad if somehow it hadn’t been so satisfying.

Men, women, and children who gazed down toward us from the rails and windows of the promenade deck and from every possible vantage point wore the unhappy faces of uncertain people who had a pretty good idea of what they were going into. A few young bucks grinned and spat contemptuously into the intervening water, but for the most part it was plain to see that the little Nips didn’t relish this adventure.

Most of the telegrams they sent to Tokyo were in English. But most striking (and the contrast was to become sharper when the Americans arrived) were piles of beach chairs, sporting goods, luggage, baby buggies, and other paraphernalia they had been allowed to take away. Studiously and, in some cases, ashamedly, they avoided the glances of the Americans and Britons they met in the streets of Lourenço Marques, in the lobby, bar, and dining hall of the Polana Hotel.

Let loose upon the town, they cleaned out shops as though locusts had descended upon them. They bought films, liquor and wines by the case. Some had their automobiles and wanted

tires, which were high-priced and scarce. One Jap offered sixty thousand escudos (roughly three thousand dollars) to the local cabdriver for a full set of five tires. He knew his dollars would be worthless in Japan. He didn't get the tires, which cost about eighty dollars each.

Lourenço Marques bankers estimated that the Japanese changed between \$200,000 and \$250,000 into escudos and must have spent nearly all of it. Americans bought clothing, perfumes, and souvenirs, too, but they could not have spent more than \$100,000. That was the amount which the State Department had authorized the banks to lend to passengers who signed promissory notes for one hundred dollars each. Most Americans saved the larger portion of their loans in order to have funds on arrival in New York.

Merchants' stocks had already been heavily drained by the shipwrecked sailors of Allied vessels sunk in the Mozambique Channel. This, plus Jap purchases of goods they knew they wouldn't obtain in Japan and to which they'd become accustomed during their residence in the United States, presented Lourenço Marques shopkeepers with a problem. The question of what to do with the currency they had acquired was another. Their shelves were empty, their tills full of foreign currency.

Geography and politics combined to make Lourenço Marques the best port from Cape Town to Suez and a logical choice for the exchange. It lies midway along the water route between New York and Yokohama and is a neutral port. But it's reasonable to believe that the citizens of Lourenço Marques wished that the geopolitics of this war had assigned the honor elsewhere.

Something of a welcome was given the Americans on their arrival. Ships in the harbor ran up their flags and the Americans saw the Stars and Stripes for the first time in months, flying on a United States freighter. There were damp eyes

aboard the *Conte Verde* and *Asama Maru*. Harbor whistles blew three dots and a dash; signal flags formed V for victory. For a few hysterical minutes Lourenço Marques Bay might have been New York welcoming a Channel swimmer or some other homecoming hero. Canadians cheered when they saw Union Jacks. For all of them, those flags meant freedom which they had never expected to have again.

The Americans weren't so lucky as the enemies in getting off the ships. They didn't have their papers in order. Few had any papers at all. Japanese police had taken away passports and other means of identification, so there was a delay before shipboard incarceration ended.

Only the action of considerate, efficient Portuguese officials, who issued emergency identification cards, enabled the Americans to land. If all the rules of international law and immigration had been meticulously followed a few passportless Americans would have stood an excellent chance of being returned to Japan.

Even Ambassador Grew himself couldn't get off the *Asama Maru* the first night. His papers weren't in order either. He had had to leave Tokyo in too great a hurry and had been too closely guarded to obtain the necessary visas which would enable the authorities here to grant him and Mrs. Grew landing cards.

The first thought of the Americans was to get into bathtubs. They stormed the Polana Hotel, which was already filled with vacationers from South Africa and a variety of officials of all nationalities. But the Americans managed to get their baths. After that, they wanted fruit. Some hadn't had any for months. Then they wanted food and drink. Aboard the *Asama Maru* and *Conte Verde* there hadn't been any liquor served. Jap stewards smuggled it to passengers at fifteen dollars a bottle.

A long period of prohibition aboard ship produced precisely the same results America's years of aridity produced

on the day beer returned. Some of our citizens got gloriously plastered. Despite this, no Japs were beaten up.

On both enemy ships there had been music but no dancing, which is legally forbidden in Italy and Japan. The food aboard ship, both passenger lists reported, was reasonably good and the service nothing to complain about.

Between Shanghai and Singapore there were two deaths at sea and two births. One couple—an American consular official and a refugee Army nurse from Guam Island—married when they arrived in Lourenço Marques. The American wife of a Japanese who had arrived on the *Gripsholm* tried to return to the United States, but her last-minute rush of nostalgia was unavailing. She sailed tearfully to the uncertainties of life in Japan.

One of the striking aspects of a week of contact with refugee fellow countrymen was that few were able to talk about anything other than their experiences. They seemed only vaguely interested in what was happening at home, and only a small minority cared what had gone on in the world since their imprisonment. From some you received the impression that they looked forward to regaling friends with elaborations of their adventures, which they hadn't quite understood.

Many of them, including a large percentage of missionaries, were alarmingly concerned with the fate of the property which they had abandoned in the Orient. Only a small minority seemed to have distilled from their experiences any wisdom, any profound anger against the enemy. There was remarkably little hate. You could feel hatred draining from them as they ate, drank, and relaxed.

This was particularly noticeable among those in the contingent from Thailand. Some of these told of eating spinach which had contained sizable worms. They complained to the camp commandant, who solved the matter by serving the spinach chopped up. They told this as a funny story.

Americans in Thailand had plenty of warning. They'd been

told repeatedly to go home—as indeed they'd been told all over the Orient for months before war broke out—but they had stayed on. Even when the Japs finally attacked Thailand there had been time to escape by train. Typical of the general gullibility prevalent was that of the British Minister Sir Josiah Crosby, who told the British community: "The Japs are merely coming through here toward Malaya. According to the armistice agreement with Thailand, nothing will happen to British and American communities. Business will go on as usual."

The first thing the Japs did in Thailand was to confiscate all British and American goods and seal up foreign nationals in their respective legations. The British in particular had relied on the Thais resisting "to the last drop of blood."

But as an Iowan, Mrs. Mary Lou Warrener, remarked, "The Thais proved to be very anaemic." They fought the Japs about three hours, then threw up their hands, saying, "Mister Jap, he move in."

First to sail from Lourenço Marques were the Japs. On the docks just before sailing, a few of them tried to unload sheafs of dollars, respectfully stopping Americans and trying to exchange their money for yen.

Less amusing was the sight of certain missionaries who staged a demonstration of fraternization with the Japs before the enemy gentry sailed. Participants on both sides couldn't have been old friends, for they came from different parts of the world. But much to the disgust of fellow Americans, who muttered "apple polishing," those missionaries were in plain sight, bowing piously, and saying polite farewells.

Finally, they were all gone—Japs and Americans and those two nice young Swiss diplomats who sailed on the *Conte Verde* for Tokyo to represent Anglo-American interests there for the duration. Lourenço Marques, whose European population of two or three thousand was more than doubled for a hectic week, settled down to gird itself for the next exchange.

Footnote on Joe Grew: *Collier's Weekly* had authorized me by cable to offer Ambassador Grew a substantial sum for the magazine rights to his diary of his Tokyo mission. I conveyed the magazine's offer to him at luncheon. He was, I saw, definitely interested. He was not concerned by the promised financial reward, that was clear, but by the opportunity of telling an important story to the considerable section of the American people which the publication in a national magazine would insure.

He told me he had had many offers, but that ours was by far the most attractive. I cannot enter further into details, of course. His story was finally told, properly or improperly edited by the State Department, in the cold, uninteresting language of diplomacy, in the recent white paper. I doubt if ever an ambassador has returned from a mission so filled with the burning sense of the necessity for political evangelism as did Mr. Grew. He is endowed with a highly developed sense of justice. This had been outraged by the Japs and their methods. He wanted to tell America what a dangerous enemy they constitute and, to some degree, Grew accomplished his aim.

Across the luncheon table, Grew struck me as an intense man, who suffers silently but profoundly. He is slightly deaf and sat just so in order to catch what I had to say about the places I'd visited and the things I'd learned from observation and from the mouths of others. He was shocked to learn that there were still many regions in the world where the war was dim and distant thunder.

Mrs. Grew, a direct lineal descendant of the Commodore Perry who opened the Orient to Western commerce and civilization and perhaps unwittingly laid the basis for the ultimate clash between the West and the East as it expresses itself in the war between Japan and ourselves, sat with us at luncheon. She is a lady of great dignity. She, like her remarkable husband, had withstood without visible effect the mal-

treatment dealt them by their captors in Tokyo. Grew, I learned, suffered most from confinement within the embassy building and grounds. He devised a back-yard golf course to indulge in his favorite game. He is probably as deeply interested in golf as he is in his craft, diplomacy. That embassy golf course was unique, a sort of oversize miniature golf course. On one leg of the course the embassy building itself was a hazard. I believe Mr. Grew related that you had to drive over the building to make the "hole" on the other side. Garden, garages, servants' quarters, the back porches, the tea-house, shrubbery—everything in the place including the dog-house—came into play. I've forgotten what the internees used for golf balls, but they weren't golf balls.

I had expected Grew to be a cold and, I must confess, a dull fellow—in short, a typical career diplomat. I found him an engaging, warm, human chap and one of the most approachable of that completely lovable ilk.

But I couldn't convince Grew to commit himself to *Collier's*. He had first to talk with Secretary Hull and with President Roosevelt. His decision depressed me. It had cost my magazine nearly \$2,000 and four weeks' time (when I might have been covering the war in Egypt) to try to obtain Grew's acquiescence to write a series of articles for us. I felt I had failed and wasted time and money. Now I wanted only to shake the dust of Lourenço Marques from my feet.

CHAPTER XVI

Axis Stooges in South Africa

IT HAS probably become apparent to the reader at this distance in the book that mine was a journey through hope and heartbreak last year. In the Union of South Africa, which I decided to revisit after my futile assignment in Neutralia, hope and heartbreak mingle strangely. Here, in more definite terms than upon my last visit the previous year, there was much that was good and much that was bad. Here there was reason to hope for the future and to despair too. Here, as in Argentina, the war was a distant thing, and here, as in England, it was a poignant reality.

It was a short run, by plane, from Lourenço Marques to Val Dam, the nearest air point to Johannesburg. The valley of the Val was in full autumnal glory. The grass was brown and the trees were golden and the cattle were confined to barnyards. The landscape was Dutchly trim and neat and its orderliness reflected the frugality of those who lived upon it. The lagoons of the backwater behind the dam reminded me sharply of Holland. There were, however, no windmills to heighten the illusion. There was only the impact of a sense of place.

Johannesburg is a biggish city, very Middle Western in atmosphere. It has more street corners than any city in the world of comparable size. This is because its founder, Oom Paul Kruger, South Africa's George Washington, cannily ordered his architect to draft his plans so that there might be as

many corners as possible available in the business section to bring in higher rents, higher taxes, and the highest possible real-estate property prices. To this day the Union worships money.

Business was booming, as usual, in the country which has never known a real depression. American forces had not yet invaded the Mediterranean and, therefore, opened a new route for the supply lines to the Middle East and beyond. South Africa was enjoying a certain pre-eminence assigned to it by the geopolitics of war.

South Africa, like other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, will bulk large in the peace to come, the peace which cannot, now, be too distant. I am speaking, of course, of peace in the West in the war against the Axis in Europe and Africa, for the other peace, that with the Japanese, is still, in my estimation, distant as this is written in the winter of 1942-43.

The Union's importance lies not only in the direction of what it will have to say at a peace conference. Were we to consider the Union merely as a participant state, its influence, as such, might not be too great. But the Union is Jan Christian Smuts, and he is a towering figure in the political life of the British Commonwealth and will not take a secondary place in any rearrangement of the world's affairs. He will be fully as vital a force at the edge of the green baize table of the next Versailles as Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Chiang Kai-shek. Only Joseph Stalin may overshadow him as, indeed, he may overshadow the others if by the time peace comes Democracy has not proved its contribution to the common victory to be at least as great as that of Communism.

At this point, it is well, perhaps, to assess the Union's own contribution to the war effort of the United Nations. And as we do so we must recognize not only the present role of the Union as a contributor to the effort in Africa and the Middle East, but its future one as a base for operations against Japan

in the Orient. The Union is as much an Atlantic and a Pacific state as it is an African nation; the only such, in fact, that can properly be called a nation in the whole continent of Africa with due respect to politically amorphous Egypt.

The Union of South Africa's national emblem is the springbok—the tall-horned, agile, veld gazelle. The animal's graceful head is etched on train windows, stamped on cigarette boxes. It is the army's insignia and epitomizes animal courage, endurance, pride, and speed. However, it was not with the agility of a springbok but with the lumbering reluctance of perhaps the more symbolic ox of Boer life that the Union went to war against Germany three and a half years ago.

Fortunately for the Allies, the Union brought to the struggle something of the power and purposefulness of the ox. In the trek to victory ahead, this power can be made to count beyond the immediate role of a halfway house between England, America, the East, and the Middle East, which geography automatically assigned to South Africa. That was the role the Cape Colony filled when Victoria the Good sat on the throne of England and the sun was still rising on the British Empire.

Already the Union's contribution to the United Nations' swelling war power substantially surpasses the purely geographic function of acting as an enormous filling-service station for convoys bound eastward with troops and munitions for the Middle East, Russia, India, and China, and for west-bound convoys with raw materials for the factories of England and the United States.

The Union's share of the United Nations' war burden includes the repairing of freighters, warships, aircraft carriers, and transports damaged by the enemy. South Africa has also become the industrial powerhouse of the African continent for the manufacture of ammunition, guns, armored cars, and spare parts for the war machinery employed on North African battlefields. It is an important source of manganese, chromium,

tungsten, and other ores, and it is developing some of the world's richest deposits of iron and coal.

At the moment Premier Smuts is working hard to quicken the pace of the South African ox to attain a double goal—the realization of the Union's almost unlimited industrial power and the fulfillment of its postwar destiny as the leader of Africa. Smuts's immediate job is to make the Union's maximum weight felt in the balance on the side of the United Nations.

But in this task, as in the other—that of creating a politically and economically stable South Africa capable of assuming the after-the-war responsibilities of continental leadership—Smuts faces numerous obstacles. Compared to the jobs of Roosevelt and Churchill in uniting the United States and Britain and exacting from them the maximum performance in the war effort, Smuts's job in South Africa was perhaps even more difficult. You can measure how well he may succeed by his performance to date. On his success may depend largely the success of the Allies during the coming months in the common front in North Africa, the Middle East, and Arabia, against Germany and Italy, and in keeping the supply lines open to China, India, North Africa, and southwestern Russia—in short, in winning the war.

On the eve of the war geographically huge South Africa was painfully divided over what the Union should do about it. The Union's two largest states are the size of Texas with Louisiana, Arizona, South Carolina, and Missouri added. Yet its 2,200,000 whites, 60 per cent of whom are of Dutch-Huguenot-Boer extraction and 40 per cent of British origin, would just about populate Philadelphia, and its 10,000,000 natives would fill New York. Like the United States, which it so closely resembles physically and in many other ways, South Africa had its interventionists, isolationists, and fifth columnists, its men of bad faith, misguided visionaries and political priests.

The Union had its outright Nazis but it also had patriots who saw Germany's attack against Poland in August 1939 as the beginning of a world struggle involving the life and death of the principles by which all self-governing peoples live. One of these was the seventy-two-year-old Jan Christian Smuts, a man with blue-gray eyes, white goatee, silver hair, a healthy pink face, and an inexhaustible faith in Democracy's power of survival, and apparently an equally limitless supply of energy and patience.

South Africa has gold, diamonds, and sharp-faced little men who balance idealism profitably with an aptitude for making money for money's sake. But South Africa, land of lean cattle and fat women, also has manganese, iron, and broad-faced, big-boned men whose eyes are focused beyond the hills of gold and the acres of diamonds to their nation's free destiny. South Africa has its Doktor Daniel François Malan, elderly predikant anti-Semite Nationalist leader, who is a devoted stooge of Radio Zeesen. But the Union also has Smuts.

On the war's eve Smuts was deputy Prime Minister in the government of General James Barry Munnik Hertzog, the Boer hero, who believed the Polish affair was just a local war and that, in any event, South Africa could remain profitably neutral. Between Smuts the Internationalist and Hertzog the Nationalist there had never been harmony. But what differences they had were petty compared to their divergence on the enormous issue of peace or war.

On September 4, twenty-four hours after England had declared war on Germany, Smuts and Hertzog laid their quarrel before the Union parliament. "Stand by Britain!" pleaded Smuts. Hertzog, during the crisis, wasn't content merely to call for neutrality. He might have got away with it if he had. Instead, he shocked fence sitters and straddlers by making what was tantamount to a defense of Hitler's policies in Europe and a justification of his assault on the world. Hertzog went down by eighty votes to sixty-seven, Smuts became

Prime Minister, and Hertzog retired to his farm, an embittered old man.

But Malan still was active as the leader of the Nationalists, who demand freedom from the British but who are the first to deny freedom to the Union's 10,000,000 blacks. The Nationalists are obstructing Smuts's quietly desperate effort to increase the pace and power of South Africa's war effort. They are keeping alive the bitter memories of the Boer War and constitute the principal opposition to Smuts's United party.

The Nationalists are assisted in their noble labor by the Germanophile former Minister of Defense Oswald Pirow, who is a protagonist of the New Order along Hitlerian lines. He promises to put Jews, capitalists, warmongers, and the supporters of Smuts generally into concentration camps after the German victory. As Minister, his outstanding contribution to the Union's defense was the purchase of high-wheeled ox-carts for the army. That was his idea of the perfect army transport for modern warfare.

The Nazi hatchet man in a weird struggle for power in South Africa's complex political setup appears to be Doktor Hans van Rensberg, führer of the obstructionist gang of small-time saboteurs. He is familiar with Ossewabrandwag, whose members are regularly haled into court on charges of what might be petty mischief in peacetime but in wartime assumes the proportions of high treason.

Malan, Pirow, and Rensberg, who keep South Africa's war effort at a plodding pace, draw their strength from among the Afrikaans-speaking people, who employ Afrikaans in preference to English, for those who know only one of the country's two languages are negligibly small in number. That mass which is predominantly Afrikaans-speaking has a strong sense of nationhood, but among the older people, who still suffer from the Boer War hangover, there are many unreconstructed rebels. This is palpably less true in the younger gen-

eration, which might comprise 20 per cent of the Afrikanders, perhaps more.

That section of the population which supports Smuts is predominantly English-speaking and descends from those Cape colonists who came after Britain grabbed the colony from the Dutch for protective custody in 1795. At the time most of Europe was at war with France, and Holland's empire was adrift much as it was when the Japs grabbed most of it recently. This English-speaking group comprises 40 per cent of the European population. (Here you don't speak of whites or blacks, but of Europeans and non-Europeans.) Added to the Afrikander loyalists they form a safe political margin for parliamentary control by the United party which Smuts heads. It is not quite a wide enough margin, however, to permit Smuts the luxury of radical changes such as arming the natives or shifting even a fraction of the labor power employed in the lucrative gold mines to the digging of ores needed in armament production.

Smuts's power, however, is increasing. The Boer general, who fought the British fifty years ago but who recognizes the incalculable service the British Navy performed in making possible the Union's growth, sees the hopelessness of the future of South Africa if the Axis wins. His dream of a Pan-African federation and of the creation of a decent world for all men would come to an end.

Up north, as they say here, on the battlefields of Egypt, I met many South African units whose primary language was Afrikaans and who saw the war the Smuts way. South Africa has raised an excellent fighting army of approximately 160,000 men from its white population. The nation could produce a larger, strictly white army through conscription. But here Smuts is up against strong opposition. It derives from one or perhaps two sources.

Conscription is opposed by the "I-didn't-raise-my-boy-to-be-a-soldier" element and by the die-hard, anti-British Boers

in sufficient numbers, who make "No Conscription" one of the planks in the Nationalist platform. But mobilization would mean the reduction of skilled labor employed in the gold mines, where at least fifty thousand whites work. It is possible that the ultra-conservative elements in the gold-mining industry (who also object to conscription) thus find themselves perhaps unwilling accomplices of the opposition.

Conscription, however, is only one of the thorns of the man-power dilemma that confronts Smuts. The other issue involves arming the natives. The Boers are against drafting the blacks. They remember the wars against the Kaffirs, the Matabele Zulus, the Hottentots, and the Griquas; they recall the white man's struggle against the Bushmen, when trekkers pushed the frontiers of what was to become the Union of South Africa to the north, east, and west into the African wilderness. Overlooking the enormous contribution the black man has made to the creation of the Union, the Boers consider any move to arm the natives as a dangerous step toward racial equality.

Here the British section of the population, although more war-conscious and more universally aware of the urgency of victory, holds to a considerable extent to the war-party line. Like the Boers, those of British descent find themselves painfully and embarrassingly aware of the white man's numerical inferiority to the black man. However, this is more true among the conservative Britishers who, in contrast to the racial policies of the Nationalists, have been almost liberal in their insistence that the natives be accorded decent living conditions, wage scales, and working hours.

Approximately half a million natives work in the gold mines. There is a shortage of native labor. Through Witwaters Rand, the native labor association, gold mines are obliged to recruit yearly one hundred thousand natives from Portuguese East Africa in order to maintain the high production rate which makes South Africa the world's greatest single gold

producer. Nearly thirteen million fine ounces a year are mined, representing approximately one third of the entire world output from sixty-six nations. America's production, including the output of the Philippines, was about five million fine ounces.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the gold miners consider that any large-scale drafting of native man power for the armed service would further complicate their labor situation. Obviously, Smuts must tread easily in dealing with the gold miners, who control the railroads, the harbors, and all the transportation, and who own the controlling interest in the Union's leading newspapers. Smuts, however, is primarily concerned with winning the war. He has committed himself in a speech in Parliament to a policy of giving the natives a greater share in the destiny of the nation. He remembers the Philippines, where the natives who had been given the promise of and a rendezvous with freedom fought the Japs.

Moreover, Deneys Reitz, Cabinet Minister, Boer warrior, and deputy Prime Minister, has vigorously campaigned in favor of arming the natives, and the issue has become the most lively one in South African politics, with public clamor in the natives' behalf growing in volume.

The natives already are making an important contribution to South Africa's war effort as unarmed fighters. I saw them building and repairing roads under fire up north, singing in Afrikaans and English as they worked. I saw them carry South African wounded, and I know of one group of unarmed stretcher-bearers who were mowed down by machine-gun fire when they refused to surrender to the enemy.

In northern Natal, on the borders of Zululand, a regiment of gunners is now being trained in which there are four natives to every gun crew of six, the other two being whites. Zulu gunners are extremely happy, for they are doing man's work, not woman's work, in the field. They won't work in

the mines, so the gold miners can't claim that any drafting of Zulus would cut down their labor supply.

Smuts's opposition is fighting a losing battle, and its only hope for return to power lies in an Axis victory. They have already sufficiently ingratiated themselves with the enemy. After the fall of France, they even tried to make a peace with Germany. But despite an almost total lack of counter-propaganda and guided only by instincts which warn them that the enemy would deny them not only their coveted Boer republic but the good life they have known since gold and diamonds were discovered in the Union, the Afrikanders have swung increasingly toward Smuts.

More people appear to believe in him now than I found to be the case here in April 1941, when the spiritual distance between South Africa and the war was the square of the distance from Cape Town to Cairo. South Africa wasn't 6,000 miles away from war then, but 36,000,000 miles.

Several factors have contributed to strengthening Smuts's political hand. Soldiers returning from the front, whether they are of Boer or English extraction, tell their families what they learned on the hot sands of Egypt. They return filled with a quiet determination to build a new world, with hatred in their hearts for the enemy. Japan's entry into the war, however, provided probably the greatest single impetus to the wheels of Smuts to arouse a sleepy, comfortable, and confused nation to fight against Germany. Aside from the fact that the Nazi agent Doktor Manfred Zapp had done his work well among the dissident Afrikanders, this nation of burghers was interested primarily then in trade profits, in digging gold, and sloshing up diamonds. Above all, South Africa and South Africans feared change.

Germany's successive assaults on Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were many thousands of miles away. But today the land-proud Boers and Afrikanders understand the blood-drenched Japanese menace.

Something else has happened to insure Smuts's survival of the worst political storm since the 1939 crisis. The South Africans have fought side by side with Englishmen, Australians, and New Zealanders and in some cases with Americans too. They have come to realize that their Allies fight for the survival of those rights which will enable them to determine their own destiny. Bred on hatred for the British, antipathy toward the insular Aussies, critical of New Zealanders who "out-British the Britishers," and suspicious of American moneygrubbers (whom they secretly envy), the South Africans have learned that "we're all fighting for the same thing, after all."

The soldiers, at least, are beginning to see that through victory they can attain those greener pastures their ancestors dreamed about. This isn't so true of their die-hard parents at home.

Not even the fall of Tobruk, where about 25,000 South African troops were lost, brought the war home to these people. In Cape Town they still fire a cannon at high noon for two minutes' silence to bring the war home to some people. When Smuts asked for 7,000 troops to "avenge Tobruk" he got only a fraction of that number, and when Tobruk fell in mid-June some Ossewabrandwag boys drank beer and heiled Hitler.

In spite of everything, South Africa's war effort is proportionately as great as that of Britain and the United States, if the existing yardstick of comparable white populations is to be taken at its established value.

On the army alone the nation whose total budget was in peacetime less than \$200,000,000 is spending \$400,000,000. This is a heavy burden for a country that is vastly rich and desperately poor; where there are only 85,000 taxpayers, individuals and companies, with taxable income of \$8,500,000,000; where only 25,000 persons earn more than \$5,000 a year; and 650 earn from \$25,000 to over \$100,000 a year.

Today more than six hundred factories in a country which had neglected all non-gold industry are working and producing small arms, ammunition, and bombs, up to thousand-pounders, hand grenades, armor plate, armored cars, parts for howitzers and anti-tank guns, ammunition cases, and one million bullet-proof tires a year. They are making steel rails, simpler machine tools like lathes, grinders, and buffers, and electric motors up to 1,000-kilowatt sizes.

Spare parts for airplanes and incapacitated tanks which had piled up in Egypt are made here and flown or shipped to American repair shops in Eritrea. They are corning Willy and drying fruits. Troop carriers, water tankers, supply trucks, canteens, and trailers pile out from assembly shops where homemade bodies were welded to chassis imported from the United States. Bombers, ferried across the South Atlantic, are armed here and flown north along with fighters shipped here from England and the United States.

By the end of 1943 the production of shells will be thirty-seven times greater than it was at the end of 1940. To the United Nations' equipment pool South Africa has contributed a half million pairs of army boots, a half million blankets, and is producing a million more of each item.

South Africa has inaugurated the commercial production of mercury, one of the rarest of basic raw materials. It is developing its manganese, chromium, copper, and tungsten deposits and is experimenting with the conversion of its abundant coal into oil. But here American capital and American machinery are needed, and Uncle Sam must decide whether we can allocate such money and equipment through Lend-Lease even if the gold mines insist on maintaining production at the present level instead of cutting down production and devoting the labor power thus released to the development of the basic metal industries.

It is a tough decision to make, for whether Uncle Sam likes it or not South Africa's economic and political structures are

balanced as delicately as a jeweler's scales on its gold. Smuts faces an election next year. If he can't keep those scales balanced properly, he might lose the election. The coming into power of the Nationalist opposition might wreck South Africa's oxcart and produce a situation which is tragically parallel to that of India. Jan Smuts might not be able to swing the South African wagon into the United Nations' laager.

This is what the old trekkers called the corrals they used to make of their covered wagons which they swung into close circles, linking wagon to wagon with trek chains and stuffing nature's barbed wire, thorn brush, between the wheels to keep out the charges of the Bushmen on the broad veld in the old Commando days.

The United Nations have lost many wagons, and only a few are left to make a strong laager against the enemy. They need South Africa, and they might even have to pay a little blackmail to the gold-mining industry to enable Smuts to survive the coming elections.

CHAPTER XVII

Return to Reality

A MONTH in South Africa almost ruined my nervous system, my digestion, and my already damaged ideals. The South African Army needed, apparently, an evangelist to try to arouse the will to win among the troops and to convince them, if possible, of the utter worth-whileness of the war. You may deduce from that that South African fighting men were lacking in the former and cynical concerning the latter. For reasons unknown to me I was drafted to "tell the boys something about the war." For a week I toured the training camps of the Union in the vicinity of Pretoria and Johannesburg. Meanwhile, I was also wined and dined by the civilians. And I was bombarded by men and women who represented the left and right wings of South African thought with their views on the Union, the war, the Negro problem, gold, economics, and American women. On the whole I enjoyed myself thoroughly, but by the end of my month's stay in the Union I was glad to leave.

I learned more from the troops than they learned from me. I found them irked by the present and worried about the future. They all felt that the Atlantic Charter had been a feeble thing and, even if they agreed with its tenets, they wanted some concrete assurance that its stated and implied principles would be carried out in the postwar world. I say *all!* That, of course, is an inaccuracy. I should say all who

asked me questions, all of those who were interested enough in the social and political aspects of the war and the peace and were sufficiently articulate to state their questions, expressed themselves in those terms. I do not exaggerate in the slightest when I say that, of all the various troops I have met, the South Africans, with the possible exception of some elements among the British soldiery, were the most concerned about the future although, I regret to say, not the easiest to reassure. Few had faith in Democracy's workability, love it as they might as a principle. But it is altogether possible that those with the most faith did not bother to ask questions reflecting doubts upon the feasibility of attaining a new society.

As I have already indicated, the Boer element among the South African soldiery was not convinced that Jan Smuts was all that he appeared to be to the naked eye. Many mistrusted him, leveled at him a criticism often directed at other leaders of the United Nations' war strategy, military and political. They indicated that they felt he was "too much of a politician," an "opportunist." One boldly inquired whether, in my estimation, he was "the kind of leader we should have in the Union." I tactfully inquired of my interrogator whether, to his knowledge, there was anyone who could replace him. He gave me the answer which is inevitable when the same question is asked concerning Roosevelt or, more often, regarding Churchill. The answer was "no."

I did discover, to my dismay, a "blind spot" in Jan Smuts's political perceptions which is probably not unique with him. I did not obtain my information from Smuts, of course, but by talking all around him among those who know him best. When I saw Smuts at tea in Swartzkopf, a training camp near Pretoria, he was his old affable, belligerently healthy self despite his advancing years. We talked of pleasant things like the weather and how good it was to see each other again. But men and women around Smuts talked of more important things such as, for instance, his blind spot concerning Russia.

Were Smuts a secondary war figure, what he feels and believes about Russia would not be important. But in view of the fact that Smuts is a power in the Imperial Councils of Britons (he hates the phrase British Empire, by the way, and often publicly wishes no one would call the Commonwealth an Empire) it is pertinent to examine, as best we can, where Smuts stands on Russia.

Politically, Smuts is a Liberal Conservative, if there can be such a thing. He is a Liberal in principle, a Conservative in practice. He is ever mindful of human frailty and does not overlook man's acquisitiveness and selfishness in his plans for a resettlement of the world's problems after the war. He believes in the Bible, in short, but clips a coupon with the best of them. South Africa's Socialists and other left-wing elements think him a weak man too eager to compromise, too ready to acquiesce to Big Business. His defenders call him a "realist," a label which, of course, covers a multitude of intellectual sins.

Smuts loathes and abhors Communism. His antipathy for Communism's only important exponents arises, however, not so much from any profound intellectual convictions regarding social and economic theories as from his deep religiousness. He is a pillar of the Dutch Church which, by the way, has an unbreakable grip on the life of the Union. Any politician not sanctioned by the Church hasn't a chance of being elected.

The best indication I had as to where Smuts stands concerning Russia came from a person very close to him, who has written much about Smuts and who is admitted to the Prime Minister's private papers and private thoughts. When I told this person that, in my estimation, the Russians had done the best job of fighting to date and could be considered the most important single political factor in the war and, unless something tremendous happened in the meantime, at the peace also, I was told "not to be so sentimental about the Russians—you know, after all, it's only an accident they're on our side." It became subsequently obvious that the views were not only

those of his most important biographer but those of Smuts as well.

I was satisfied that Smuts will not allow anything, not even the good of the world as a whole, to stand in the way of attainment of his dream of Pan-Africa, in itself a form of local imperialism. I found nothing in the intellectual and political life of the Union asserting itself strongly enough to insure that Smuts Pan-Africanism will constitute a permanent solution of the problems of the Dark Continent, the colonial plum basket of the Western world.

My travels in the Union and on the east coast of Africa confirmed my growing conviction that the peace-table problems will offer none less complex than those involving this continent. All along the east coast a "new" problem has been injected, that of the migrant Indians. They have become the unwanted Jews of the Dark Continent. Industrious and frugal and smart, they've secured a firm hold on the small trade of the coast. The British resent their presence. But there are millions of Indians and only a few British. In Johannesburg, Bulawayo, Nairobi, Mombasa, and elsewhere you hear the Indian problem talked of in the same language as you heard the Jewish problem discussed in prewar Europe between 1935 and 1939. It's the language of hate and fear. Any settlement of the Indian question as a whole must, inevitably, take into consideration, also, this specific African aspect. The learned ones in the universities of Stellenbosch and Cape Town are rabid on the subject. Rabid and bitter.

All the way from Johannesburg to Cairo, however, I found evidence of the new pace of American contribution to the war effort. Everywhere I saw planes, planes, and more planes—fighters, medium and heavy bombers. I found everywhere more American equipment than I had imagined possible. At Khartoum several airfields were covered with American-made ships, Lend-Lease machines. And everywhere our sky trucks landed and took off, delivering spare parts, instruments, am-

munition, and other articles too numerous to name. It was obvious that the war had attained a spiritual sogginess here and there, but it was equally obvious that, militarily, at least, we were determined to win it.

By the time I reached hot, torpid Khartoum I had shaken off the South Africa jitters. I had become depressed to find South Africa mining 37 per cent more gold in wartime than at any peacetime peak. I had been appalled by the self-concern of the Union's Big Businessmen. Down there they took plenty of gasoline and their unrationed existence generally for granted. There were 1943 American automobile models in the show windows and there were plenty, if exorbitantly priced, tires. There was butter and meat and plenty of good wine, and the stocks of Scotch and gin were high. The women were willing, no matter that their husbands were fighting or had died or had been captured in the north. Even Khartoum was good after all that. Khartoum was a cleansing—particularly when you looked down the rows of Bostons wing to wing.

Cairo was the same old town. The enemy was still within grabbing distance of Alexandria. But Cairo hadn't changed much. I noticed, however, that there were new troops in the streets, red-faced, sunburned men just off the transports. They wore the insignia of the Highland Division on their shoulders. A new offensive was in the making.

First, however, I wanted to learn the secret of why it was that Rommel had come so close to victory and had failed. Rommel stopped dead in his hot tracks at the edge of the Nile Delta. What stopped him?

CHAPTER XVIII

Air Power Did It

I DID NOT NEED TO LOOK far for the secret of how Rommel was thwarted from fulfilling his public boast that he would use Shepheard's Hotel as his GHQ before July was out.

The afternoon I arrived in Cairo the air overhead pounded with the beat of motors. There were nearly two hundred Bostons in the sky over Cairo. Arabs looked up and smiled. They knew.

At General Lewis Brereton's headquarters there was no reticence about telling a reporter how Egypt had been saved. Air power did it. Back in July, when it seemed Rommel would not be halted, we read of 1,000-bomber raids over Germany and we wondered if the brass hats in London and Washington had read the newspapers and seen what was happening to Egypt. In Cairo that certain American who is habitually disinclined to pessimism said, "Pray for a miracle," while officers who knew how vital to victory the possession of Egypt was frantically cabled Washington and London to rush weapons which would make that miracle come to pass. It did. It was a very unmetaphysical miracle.

Light, medium, and heavy bombers, bound for India for war against Japan, stopped in Egypt. They came from the factories of America and England. They included big British Wellingtons and Halifaxes and huge American Flying Fortress and B-24s and Bostons and Mitchells and others

made in the United States. They dumped thousands of tons of bombs on Rommel's advancing columns. They smashed his supply lines, battered the coast ports through which he received fresh men and new weapons. They struck at enemy convoys in the Mediterranean.

Yank pilots flew Fortresses until their engines wore out. American and British pilots flew B-24s and Liberators without rest. (It is practically the same plane, but in Yank language it is a B-24 and in RAF-ese a Lib.) These four-motored giants took off on new sorties almost before their engines had cooled. They arrived late, those big fellows. They didn't get into action until June 27, but they finished the job which fighters and fighter bombers and medium bombers had already begun. These smaller pieces of air artillery made 13,000 raids in less than thirty days.

Rommel was stopped for many reasons. Tired Tommies, Indian troops, and South Africans were suddenly reinforced, first by New Zealanders and then by an Australian force which was rushed up from base areas. They had time to rest, re-form, and dig in on the line from El Alamein south to the edge of the Qattara salt marshes where the Egyptian desert narrows down to fifty miles. The restricted nature of the new battlefield in itself helped halt the Afrika Korps general. Rommel is a military quarterback who likes plenty of room for his razzle-dazzle kind of warfare, for his end sweeps, fake bucks, and off-tackle thrusts. He found himself suddenly cramped and unmaneuverable, as he finds himself now in Tunisia.

For the first time Rommel was obliged to fight what was straight, orthodox warfare against soldiers whose major strength was that very orthodoxy which had been their undoing on broader battlefields farther west. Rommel might have reached his objectives—Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez—had he been able to plow through to the Nile Delta where he could resume his favorite kind of military football. He might

have reached the flat, broad, cool green plains of the delta had he been able to bring up water, food, fuel, and reinforcements in men and weapons. It was precisely that which air power prevented sufficiently to halt Rommel, and the Axis wave crashed against the El Alamein line and broke. Just when geography forced Rommel to revert to straight football his opponent took to the air.

Air power stopped him in July and air power can defeat him. Of all the air weapons employed in halting him, the one which may be paramount in an eventual defeat of the Afrika Korps and its Italian drones, one was outstanding.

This was the B-24, wonder ship of this war, despite those RAF enthusiasts who insist that the Wellingtons and Halifaxes are the finest things on wings, in spite of the Yanks who will tell you heatedly that there's nothing in the world to compare with North American's B-25s or the B-17s.

I flew in one of the B-24s on a raid on Tobruk. It was an RAF raid, so we will have to call the ship a Liberator. I watched them dump censorable thousands of pounds of bombs from our ship onto specific targets in what would become the main entry port for reinforcements for the Afrika Korps. It was all as unromantically routine as an overnight airplane ride from New York to Duluth, minus some of its comforts, but not many. And because of the flying characteristics of this particular airplane I was just about as safe. Yanks called the Tobruk run the milk route. In RAF language, when you bombed Tobruk you called it "Doing TB."

The Liberator's name was Kathleen and I learned about air power from her, as I learned much about flying and human courage and what goes on inside the mind of a bomber pilot from the Irishman who piloted Kathleen that night. His name was Terry and he came from Armagh. They called him "Terrible Terry" or "Butch," because he had china-blue eyes and a frankly handsome face that was completely unconscious of its manly beauty—a face that smiled without smiling. We met

in the briefing room at a certain squadron base in the desert.

It was good to be in that briefing room. I had just come from South Africa. The war made plenty of sense where Terry and other pilots, navigators, gunners, and radiomen listened with composed excitement to the flight instructions from their wing commander. The skipper diagramed for them their order of take-off, their course, their separate targets, poking a pointer at them on the huge intelligence map chalked on the blackboard. Those RAF men—some of those few who have done so much for so many—seemed to have a collective single-mindedness of purpose which was like a healthy tonic after the political, economic, and ideological arguments I had had in Johannesburg.

Terry fixed me up with a parachute, a Mae West, warm clothing, a helmet, and an oxygen mask. "You'll need that one," he said when he handed me the last piece of equipment—a box containing two bars of chocolate, a thermos flask filled with hot tea, a package of dry biscuits, and several packets of gum. "We'll be gone a long time," he added.

We loafed in the mess, dozed until dinner, after which we quit stooging about and came awake. Talk subsided gradually to a minimum of strictly essential words. Some of the veterans tried weakly to kid us about where we'd like our mail sent in case we didn't come back, but nobody laughed much.

Then one of the boys, an Aussie, asked seriously, "Why in heaven's name do you want to go on one of these rides?"

I said I was "just curious," but our eyes met, and he seemed to understand okay because nothing further was said.

Trucks carried us to our separate ships. We found Kathleen waiting for us, the dim light from her open belly showing on the ground. Members of the crew and the ground staff were making last-minute checks on armament, equipment, and instruments. After what seemed to be an interminable wait Terry said I'd better get aboard. Everything happened quickly after that. We took our places aboard ship in a blue-black

darkness. The only light was a faint glow on the instrument panel and blurred blotches of luminous dials.

Terry warmed up Kathleen's big horsepower plant. Four motors at full throttle made the ship vibrate. They sang with power loudly and healthily, and I thought with pride, "We made this ship." Terry released the Lib's brake and the ship moved forward, swung into position on the runway, and with a deafening roar we were in the air.

I must have slept for an hour or two. I had been conscious of an indescribable noise, darkness, the faint smell of lubricating oil and gasoline, and the definite smell of bakelite and electrical instruments. We had taken off long before moonrise, and the next thing I remember was the sudden impact of noise and the clearly defined silhouettes up forward of Terry and his copilot Jack. There was starlight and the moon was an orange disk, hanging low on the horizon. Terry's authoritative voice was saying over the intercommunicating telephone receivers in my helmet, "Will American passenger please put on his oxygen mask. We are at nine thousand feet and climbing. Please reply, Mr. American."

I switched on the mike that lay on my chest and said, "Okay, pal."

Terry said, "Attaboy, Frank. It won't be long now."

It must have been hours later, though they seem like minutes now—flashes of time filled with small, penetrating fears that the ack-ack might get us, that we might be intercepted by a German night fighter, that somehow I might betray these fears to the calm, quiet, efficient men about me—when I heard the navigator's voice over the intercom saying, "Captain—navigator—here—we're nearing target, sir—there's flak up ahead."

Terry said, "Okay—Gunner Jones—Gunner Jones," and when the gunner answered with an eager "Yes sir," Terry ordered him and the others in turn to test their armament. There were short bursts from many points on the ship in turn.

I saw several shells from our heavier guns burst brightly against the sky ahead of us above the pilot's hood.

The wireless operator sat across the narrow aisle from me, a Wellsian figure in helmet, a parachute harness, and Mae West before the dim, blue-green light over his apparatus, which by the way was a marvel of simplicity. I sat in a comfortable chair behind the pilot in the flight deck.

By raising myself between Terry and Jack, I could see bright orange bursts of flak ahead over Tobruk—bursts that were like short-lived poppies that bloomed and died in fractions of seconds. I thought I smelled cordite. I thought I felt Kathleen bouncing about in the air roughened by explosions.

Then again Terry's calm voice: "Will one of the gunners come forward, please, and conduct our American passenger to the bomb bay, where he can observe the effects of bombing. Other ships ahead of us are on target. I can see their bursts."

Another Wellsian figure grabbed my wrist and led me aft through bomb racks. It was a tight squeeze between the stanchions that held tons of death, with my cumbersome chute and equipment, and suddenly I was in a world filled with more noise than I had believed engines and machinery could make.

Here in the bomb bay there was only a thin skin of metal between us and the chaos that the engines and the explosions of ack-ack shells made. And there was a roar of air on our hull. I adjusted my oxygen mask and plugged in my intercommunicating phone in time to catch the voice of the navigator, "Shall I open the doors of bomb bay, sir?" And Terry's voice replying, "Okay."

There was a whir of motors, a low, angry sort of whir, and then the blast of an air current that tore upward into the ship's innards. I opened the bulkhead door and watched the bombs leave their racks and saw distant bursts. I counted them, but I can't tell you how many I saw. They made thick rings below that glowed momentarily like huge, hollow-centered blobs of hot coals or incandescent lava. There were other Libs over

Tobruk that night, and flights of Halifaxes, and those glowing round blobs with dark centers were many.

I had been in Tobruk on the receiving end of enemy bombs. I am not ashamed to admit that I watched those bursts with a certain sense of satisfaction.

But what I thought or felt or what that calm, cool little Irishman up forward thought or felt isn't important. What is more important is that Kathleen behaved beautifully. I needn't have worried about flak hitting us. She kept us high and secure above its hot steel. She flew us at such speed that the ack-ack couldn't find us and follow us rapidly enough. She was on her target and off it too quickly despite her one-hundred-and-ten-foot wing span, her sixty-four feet of length, her eighteen feet of thickness. Her four Pratt-Whitney supercharged engines could howl along at a speed almost too fast for night fighters to catch Kathleen's sixty thousand pounds of utilitarian beauty. Men who go out in ships like Kathleen know they're going to get there and come back.

We were headed eastward—toward home and the dawn. Now there was danger only of interception. For this, Kathleen was ready. Enemy interceptors would have received blasts of lead and steel from every conceivable part of the big ship. Everybody relaxed. I slept. I must have slept a long time for when I awakened there was a sharp light. We were flying low, and the Mediterranean was cool below us.

Terry said, "I didn't have the heart to waken you, but you missed a magnificent sunrise."

We poured tea and shouted pleasantries at one another. It was hot. I got out of my chute harness and Mae West and looked out of the window of the copilot's seat. Jack had moved over to Terry's place. He grinned good morning at me, and very soon we were flying over ocher sand that rippled endlessly from the blue rim of sea toward the horizon. Then patches of green and figures looking up from their work to wave at us—Liberators.

Later that morning we sat around and talked of bombing and bombers and of their role in war. There is an easy, democratic atmosphere in RAF messes which you don't find where old school ties and caste and class too frequently determine officers' aloofness, one from the other. In RAF messes rank doesn't matter so much and talks are free, easy, and natural. They said much about what was in their minds about bombing and here is the gist of it.

The great value of what these men have to say lies in the fact that it comes from men who have fought three years in the air, who have saved England—who have averted disaster in Egypt. These are the men who might have long ago won this war for us had they and their machines been on other battlefields in sufficient numbers.

First of all, they've got faith in themselves and their machines. They know the bomber is a good weapon. They disagree with those traditionalists who say that aviation can't win battles. They don't argue that air power is everything; they merely put air power in its proper relation to the war.

They recognize that the bomber is a brand-new weapon. Used with imagination, there is almost no limit to what it can accomplish. None of the airmen with whom I talked were silly enough to say that the bomber alone can win the war. But they did insist that the power of warships at sea is limited unless supported by air power, and that the strength of land armies is directly proportionate to the strength of the air force overhead.

So far the bomber is the only weapon developed by the Allies which overwhelmingly excels anything that the enemy has produced. In bombers we've got the enemy licked. Our so-called Boston mediums and Liberator heavies outclass anything the enemy has or immediately can put into the air.

One of the lessons the last campaigns taught the Allies was that we've still got a long way to go toward producing a really great fighter plane. Despite all the soft-soap propaganda to the

contrary, our Kittyhawks and Tomahawks weren't exactly the world's greatest fighters. Above twenty thousand feet they were inferior to the enemy's 109s and 110s. The enemy's fighters are good up to thirty-two thousand feet, and it is no longer a secret now that, in that part of the sky between twenty and thirty-two thousand feet, we had few Spitfires in the last campaign.

That brings us to another evil which must be corrected before we can maintain our supremacy in the air over Egypt, and over the Mediterranean, and therefore before the Middle East can be considered secure.

The Middle East desperately needs spare parts, desperately needs mechanics and technicians—mechanics who are willing to work with their hands elbow deep in grime and grease. That's one of the greatest contributions America can make to the Allied war effort in the Middle East—to supply such men. One of the Middle East's great weaknesses has been the fact that of the total planes available here all have not been, by any means, in fighting condition.

An American politician came and told us and the world at large that the war was practically over. But fliers themselves and their officers, high and low, see things as they are. They are the ones who risk their necks doing a job every day. They listen patiently to the traditionalists who still insist battles are won "by cold steel." These same traditionalists point to the fact that the Germans run from cold steel, avoid man-to-man bayonet combat, as proof of the British Army's superiority on land. This makes fliers and more imaginative people generally smile or laugh out loud.

"Sure, the Germans don't like cold steel," said an Australian. "Who does? So the Germans keep away from cold steel!"

But if bombing is hard enough and sustained over long periods, concentrated against the enemy's planes, tanks, and other weapons, and particularly against his supply system, then traditionalists can talk about cold steel. Once the bomb-

ing has reduced the enemy's power in the battlefield it is purely an exercise in elementary military tactics to overcome him with the bayonets that the traditionalists insist on, although tanks, armored cars, and artillery would be better.

Bombings are only a part of air strategy. Even the most sanguine of bomber pilots with whom I talked through that morning and most of the afternoon admitted this. Fighters of various categories, each designed to do a specific job with light bombers and medium bombers, all have their roles to play.

But it's the bomber that represents heavy artillery, the crushing blow, the knockout wallop. Enough bombers in time will crush Rommel as they will crush the enemy on whatever front we fight him. So far we've never had enough bombers—or enough of any other kind of plane in the Middle East—to do the job properly. Maybe you have read somewhere about our air superiority out here. In those desperate days that ended at El Alamein we were outnumbered two to one. My authority for that is the Royal Air Force journal for July 11, 1942. But there are increasing signs that both in Washington and in London there is a growing recognition not only of the importance of air power but also of the importance of the Middle East as a battlefield. But the Middle East still needs more bombers like Kathleen, and better ones when they are made. They saved Egypt, those bombers—they can save the world. Our tough, touchy guys in khaki can resent the fact that the RAF calls ships like Kathleen Liberator instead of B-24, but no ship was ever better named Liberator.

CHAPTER XIX

Rommel Meets the AAF

AIR ACTION against the Afrika Korps did not end with the blasting given them by the Royal Air Force through the end of June and July. By the end of July the Americans had arrived in force and they continued the good work. I visited our airdromes east of Suez, in Palestine, and spent considerable time with our airmen and their officers. They were a heart-warming lot, weapon-proud and able. One day I stayed with a heavy bombardment group and watched them prepare the ships for a raid and waited for them to return.

From dawn, through the hot morning until early afternoon, the ground crews groomed the four-engined giants that lay scattered about on the field, some hidden by revetments, others out in the open where their motors hurled back typhoons of dust. They made the air and the ground itself tremble with their rich baritone roar. It was obvious that all the available aircraft would be fit by take-off time. It's one of the boasts of our heavy-bombardment squadrons that they're at maximum mechanical efficiency for every raid. That is seen to by boys who used to play with radios, automobiles, and flying models and who have grown up into what are probably the best mechanics in the world.

While pilots, navigators, gunners, and radiomen were in the briefing room just before lunch, receiving instructions on what targets to hit, what course to fly going out and returning, our armorers bombed up those quarter-million-dollar

beauties. Bombs were wheeled out on trucks pulled by a perky little big-wheeled tractor. Trains of bomb trucks moved toward each plane in turn like so many chains of ambulant wienies.

Big B-24Ds were gassed and bombed, with their motors warmed, by the time our air crews had finished their beef stews and swallowed their second or third cups of Java, brewed American style. Mess hall, administrative offices, and workshops were emptied of men and officers, who went to stand at the edge of the field in groups before the control tower and along the runways to watch the take-off. They all watch take-offs in our heavy-bombardment squadrons and they're on hand to see them come home, no matter what time, unless they've important work to do.

It had become tradition in the few weeks since our squadrons began operating in this theater. I've seen them leave a movie, just when Hedy Lamarr had whittled down Spencer Tracy's resistance, to watch a pal bring in his ship from a raid.

A tough, bowlegged Texan sergeant they call Woody explained. "I love to hear 'em sing," he said in a low voice. "Never get tired of it, somehow. They look kind of awkward there on the ground, but they're beautiful when they slide into the blue and pull up their clumsy feet. Just watch—"

A major was standing by; he caught my eye and winked. He leaned over and whispered in my lee ear, "They're as sentimental as kids about these airplanes. For a lot of tough guys, they're the biggest bunch of softies you can imagine—about airplanes."

The flight leader was first on the runway. He handled his big ship, nearly thirty tons of death- and fire-laden aircraft, as though it were a roadster. He taxied his ship to the end of the runway, swung her about, gunned her, and ran smoothly into the wind in one sinuous motion.

Woody jabbed me in the ribs with his elbow and shouted, "That's the major. I can always tell from the way he handles

her, even if I didn't know he was leading this flight. Texas boy!"

Built like a steer, the major was only one of what seems to be a small legion of Texans in our bombardment groups. Texans appeared to outnumber and outyell the rest of the boys by two for every one from anywhere else. There was a fair smattering of Georgians, too, and men from the cotton states, where some learned their flying dusting crops. But Texans were about as ubiquitous as Lewis Brereton himself, who commanded them and has fought in the Dutch East Indies, Burma, and Malaya. It's the consensus of opinion that this apparent numerical superiority is a good thing for our air forces and definitely bad medicine for Herr Rommel.

Woody was shouting Texan propaganda at me while the last of the raiders was getting away. Woody insisted that if it's true that Rommel had a nervous breakdown or that he'd fallen out of favor with Hitler (both of which stories made about as much impression on us as a hotfoot would on the Sphinx) it's because he'd heard there are a few Texans here.

I asked Woody where he was from.

"Texas," he replied, much in the manner of a man who suddenly realizes that he might be overselling an idea.

But these boys are good. Some fought with Chennault in China, others with Brereton on a succession of battlefields. Many had been posted to fight the Japs and were detoured into the Middle East last May and June when it became imperative to halt the Afrika Korps short of Alexandria and Cairo—men handpicked for a difficult assignment.

No job could have been more difficult than the one handed our fliers when they arrived. After a highly overpublicized start they settled down to business and earned the praise that was heaped upon them in those first raids.

One American squadron alone completed dozens of long-distance, heavy-bombardment missions in less than eight weeks. That squadron and others can look back on a well-

done job. In the process of stopping Rommel and fulfilling their task, they established the superiority of our bombers over those of the enemy and recorded the fact that American fliers, like American mechanics, haven't any superiors.

They proved that when they appear in any area in sufficient strength—and they don't even need overwhelming superiority—they are masters of the enemy. From what American fliers have accomplished in the Middle East you can deduce many things: our planes are good and our men are good and the workers who made the planes are doing honest work, for those ships of ours seem able to take a tremendous amount of punishment and still fly.

It was daring and skillful airmanship which enabled a certain pilot to land his bomb-laden ship safely on two motors when two engines conked out about an hour after the take-off. But it was also proof that good workmanship went into the building of that plane.

What measure of mastery we've regained over the Mediterranean has been due to air power, and particularly to the work of heavy-bombardment groups. Our bombers' targets have been: (1) enemy convoys which carry troops, weapons, and supplies to Italo-German armies in North Africa; (2) ports in Italy, Sicily, Greece, and Crete where such reinforcements are embarked; (3) ports along the North African coast, where Rommel receives men, munitions, food, and fuel for his armies; (4) airdromes, depots, and bases in Greece, Crete, and the Dodecanese Islands, where the enemy had been piling up manpower and weapon power.

Heavy bombings obliged the enemy to lengthen his convoy routes by several hundred miles in order to avoid severe losses in ships and vital cargoes.

What had been a short supply line between Tripoli and Sicily became a long, dangerous route for the enemy. He was obliged not only to make a long detour far west of the normal course that was guarded by the fortress of Pantelleria

and safely patrolled by his destroyers and aircraft, but he was also forced to break up his convoys into small units and to employ his badly needed submarines as cargo ships.

Brereton's orders to pilots and bombardiers were very simple and direct: "Go get 'em!" Our bombers have attacked objectives despite the known presence of fighter patrols. They mauled Tobruk, Benghazi, and Mersa Matruh, and they've banged Candia and Suda Bay and other ports in Greece and Crete. In their very first job sometime last June, before Italians were aware of the presence of American air power in the Mediterranean, they caused a neatly formed convoy (escorted by cruisers, destroyers, and fighters, and headed confidently for Tobruk) to forget the whole business and return home.

One night a squadron of ours operating from somewhere east of Suez attacked the Cretan airport of Meleme. The Germans apparently were expecting large air forces of their own to arrive. Our boys met no ack-ack. The first of our ships over the target hadn't any bombs, and as it approached the enemy below turned on the floodlights. It dived low and sprayed everything in sight with cannon fire. Guided by the floods, ships coming in behind the first one laid their bombs neatly and caused many fires and explosions. After the first stick, the enemy turned out his floodlights, but by that time our boys didn't need any beacons. They made their own.

It had come hard a few months before to read astronomical production figures in the newspapers though, and then to find so few airplanes where they were needed so desperately. Men in our squadrons felt it but, if anything, it helped to generate a cold-blooded and highly workmanlike attitude toward this war in the desert, which wasn't so apparent when they first arrived.

Then they all wanted to get at the Japs, as though the Japs were the only enemy. One of our officers said he wished the British would get this over with quickly, so that our squadrons could leave for China or India—"To fight those Japs, like we're supposed to do."

I asked this same officer whether he'd take me on a bombing trip to Naples sometime.

He said, "Naples? Why bomb Italians? They're such nice people. They don't want this war."

That attitude has almost vanished. They've learned that Italian ack-ack is still ack-ack and that the enemy we face in the deserts is every bit as important as the enemy anywhere else. Now they're anxious to get the whole business over with as soon as possible. To do that, they need planes, planes, and more planes.

Their morale? It's good in spite of a series of unfortunate circumstances recently corrected, but which, until removed, caused the men to grumble. New pay schedules voted by Congress back home occasioned revision of pay rolls here and an inordinate amount of paper work. When, finally, the barricades of paper were cleared away, some three months had passed, but the men got their pay.

Their ability to improvise seems inexhaustible. Say they have three planes which can't fly for lack of spares. If they can't make the parts, they'll grab a brand-new plane and cannibalize it to keep the others flying despite an airman's abhorrence of desecrating a new ship. They'll even make English cigarettes do when they can't get their own brands, and that for an American is improvisation of a high order.

Somebody ought to do something about this cigarette business. Men and officers in the field aren't receiving many of those "smokes for Yanks" you people at home are sending. Another source of irritation for our fighting men was the fact that they hadn't been receiving reading matter. They missed American magazines, detective stories, books, and newspapers.

Reporter Tom Treanor of the Los Angeles *Times*, who was the only newspaperman in the Middle East from west of the Mississippi, wrote an item about this deficiency in his column. A few weeks later a flood of magazines arrived addressed to the Halverson Detachment, which was the pioneer bombard-

ment squadron in the Middle East and considered itself the elite of this gang of house wreckers.

One West Coast doctor was so impressed with the need for supplying reading matter to our troops that he put \$7.50 worth of stamps on a single copy of a magazine and sent it air mail, first class, special delivery.

Otherwise, the boys were happy and healthy. They get just about the only decent potatoes in that part of the world, the best beef, and the best fresh vegetables. Their hosts, the RAF, have in some cases denied themselves to provide for their guests.

As any top sergeant will tell you, the cornerstone of morale among troops is mail from home. In this respect our troops have been luckier than most soldiers fighting on distant fronts. I was present when they opened letters postmarked ten days and less from the date of receipt. You can watch their spirits rise at mail time as unmistakably as the red column moves upward in a thermometer when you put a match under its bulb.

They provide a fair sample of what our Army is like in the field. A few months ago, men who now live in tents, barracks, and huts were soda jerkers, businessmen, and mechanics. They were junkmen from Joplin, well drillers from Waco, pants pressers from Philly. But they look and act like an army.

Their equipment, from the neat insignia on shoulders and collars to their weapons, is indubitably the best in the world and the envy of all soldiers who see it. Our discipline takes into consideration the fact that it's a citizens' army and therefore it's probably the unsalutingest army in the world, next to the Australian.

Off duty, officers don't work at their ranks at all. On duty, except on parade or inspection, the fundamental face of equality seems to underlie even the most respectful "Yes sir." This is hard to illustrate. You've got to see it, hear it, live with it, to appreciate it.

Pride in themselves, but particularly in their equipment, is

one of our soldiers' characteristics that impresses you most. Judging from the conversation at mealtimes and while waiting about for the boys to return from their raid, airplanes supersede even the soldiers' classic subject of small talk—women. They'll talk airplanes to you until your head buzzes. They'll talk you into a tail spin, for instance, about Minnie.

Minnie was born in the factories of the Consolidated Aircraft Company in California about two years ago, which is a long time for an airplane. Like that other Minnie—the one in the song—this one has lived. Last December 31 Minnie, known then merely as another 1B-30 (which is a British version of B-24), was flown to Trinidad by a redhead named H. M. Markey, of Dill Field, Florida.

In Trinidad, Minnie developed a leaky gas tank and was laid over so long for repairs that the boys speculated on whether she'd ever get away or whether (like Minnie of the song) she was caught forever in the toils of the tropics. But this Minnie escaped.

One morning Captain Horace Wade (who is a major now), a slight, sandy-haired fellow from Magnolia, Texas, with a sort of half-pay blond mustache, took Minnie off on what was to be a remarkable career. Minnie fought the Japs off Borneo, returning from one mission with the scalp of a Jap cruiser dangling from her blunt and lethal snout.

Minnie flew supplies into the beleaguered Philippines and brought out valuable pilots who thus lived to fight another day. She did reconnaissance work through acres of flak over Burma, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies. Minnie flew General Wavell from Java to Ceylon, evacuated women and children out of Borneo. She carried Brereton all over India on a survey of new air routes and, just for exercise, bombed Rangoon once.

Now Minnie's in the Middle East, her complexion blotched by wind, sand, and monsoon, but coveted by the British, who can't have her. Men of Wade's squadron feel that Minnie

after more than four hundred hours in the air and more than a hundred thousand air miles (which is about four times around the world) has earned a rest. She lies out on a field now, carefully tended by Sergeants Pekuri, Hitchcock, and others, who keep her ready for more hours, more miles, but not in action. They're afraid something might happen to her. When she dies, they want to see Minnie die this side of heaven, where they can pick up the pieces and give them proper burial.

They're tough, these soldiers of ours, especially about airplanes.

The major interrupted his sentimental small talk about Minnie to remind us that the boys would be getting in soon. We went out and found the steps under the control tower crowded with men, all talking in a subdued way.

We lighted cigarettes, flashes of lighters and matches revealing lean, sunburned features of American faces.

Soon the first ship's motors sounded overhead, and the control tower gave her a green light. There was deep silence on the runway. Men watched the landing intently, catching every technical detail of operation. In a few seconds the three wheels touched. There was a heavy screech of brakes.

"You can do that with a B-24," Woody said. "She's a perfectly balanced ship. But try slapping on the brakes on a B-17 while her tail's still up. Boy! Oh, boy! You go over on your—"

"Saaay! Looka here—" That was one of the Texans who piloted B-17s.

The time until the second ship came in was filled with loud argument about the relative merits of B-24s and B-17s. Ships came in singly, in precisely the same order in which they'd taken off. One of the men who'd just come down from the control room whispered that the ships had all checked in except one. This killed conversation, and all waited quietly, smoking in the dark.

Then we heard her motors. The sound men made at that

moment was not exactly a cheer but something like that—a sudden animated sound of relieved voices talking about everything except that airplane up there. Very soon she was down, too, and all planes had returned safely. Figures dim in the darkness started piling out from trucks that had gone to various planes to take off crews. There was a rush for the mess hall, where there was breakfast.

CHAPTER XX

My Trouble with Willkie

ONE OF TWO MEMORABLE EVENTS of the last days of August and early September in Egypt was Wendell Willkie's visit. The other was the crushing defeat of the Afrika Korps in what was, really, the first round of the new battle for the Mediterranean. In this action the myth of Rommel's invincibility was destroyed. It was a brief, hot struggle and almost as destructive to the German war machine in Egypt as a short circuit in a giant generator.

The two events—the victorious battle and Willkie's arrival—coincided so closely that they became confused. The newspaper boys hardly had time to cover the first event before it telescoped into the second, and they were very busy with the second. The blitz visit was crammed with statements, interviews, receptions, cocktail parties, appearances before still and movie cameras, radio talks, calls on diplomats and kings, conferences with politicians, soldiers, and more diplomats.

Short as it was, the correspondents worked harder and longer during Willkie's visit than at any other time while away from the fighting front. But he provided them with more fun than they'd had since coming to cover this singularly humorless war. The correspondents had become a bit jaded from pulling old school ties, deplored the hectic night life of Cairo, and covering retreats. Willkie shook up their livers.

He sassed the censors, made formal diplomatic calls in a lounge suit instead of the sacred striped pants and tail coat of

tradition. He managed to impart to nearly everything he did an atmosphere—spiritually equivalent to that of a clambake. Censorship, motivated by the sheer necessity for keeping Berlin in the dark for the time being as to Willkie's views about political and military affairs in the Middle East, prevented details of his visit from becoming known. This is an attempt to supply some of those missing details.

In any other setting the breezy politician might have seemed a heroic figure, remarkable for his frankness and sincerity. In the Middle East, however, with its traditions of reticence, its insistence on secrecy in political and military matters, Willkie's act didn't quite come off. He was usually out of character and seemed, most of the time, a huge and handsome bull in a storeful of porcelain images. Every time he moved, you wanted to warn him that he might break something.

He did some good, but he also broke a few images. The damage occurred despite the presence in his cruise crew of Joseph Barnes, soft-spoken former newspaperman who is now an official of the Office of War Information. Joe was the conscience of the party, a small voice which kept saying, "Be careful, Wendell! Somebody might be trying to sell you a bill of goods. Watch what you say and remember this is a British battlefield and they are the bosses here."

He didn't prevent Willkie, however, from calling on His Majesty King Farouk of Egypt in an ordinary suit. The G.O.P. white hope may have pleased the home folks with such behavior. He acted naturally and was himself at all times. But his manner of doing things was considered bad form by those whom we were trying to impress.

To Egyptians as well as some of us there at the time, Wendell's trip to the Middle East seemed much less that of an emissary from President Roosevelt than of a politician making hay for a future election campaign. Subsequently, at dinners and luncheons and on other occasions he let fall remarks which tend to confirm this suspicion.

Willkie's first plunge into Middle East affairs happened in the marbled hall of the impressive headquarters of the United States forces in North Africa, formerly the home of a wealthy Egyptian family. The active and passive press, uniformed and ununiformed, male and female, American and foreign, were there about seventy strong. Even the *Times* of London came; so did British and American censors.

Willkie, in a summer-weight, single-breasted suit, his pants belt tight around his middle, his hair rumpled, and looking very much a man of the people in his white shirt and unremarkable necktie, sat on a chair before a table set on the first landing of a staircase that swept upward behind him. There was a shaft of light on his face from an open door. He assured us that the Yankees were doing well, but he expressed concern about the Brooklyn Dodgers' chances.

Then he turned prophet. He announced that, in his opinion, Hitler was 'way out on a limb and that the tide had turned against the enemy. Pressed for an explanation, Willkie hedged. He admitted that, while the tide had turned, the tide still would take a long time to engulf the enemy. The victory of which he talked so brightly seemed to us still far away (more distant than it seems now, in the winter of 1942-43).

It wasn't so much what Willkie said as the manner in which he said it. We got the impression that the war was practically over; that Hitler was licked. Willkie generated an atmosphere of optimism that continued to brighten life in Cairo long after he left.

Later, at another press conference, someone asked him whether the folks at home realized the importance to the United Nations of holding the Middle East and, in a later phase of the war, of using it as a springboard for an attack against Europe and the Balkans. Here Willkie struck a blow for Democracy. He said he didn't believe Americans did realize it.

He explained that his mission was partly to bring the Middle East to the attention of the American people, and everybody

cheered. A press veteran of many battles with censorship in Eastern and Central Europe then inquired whether Willkie believed Americans were sufficiently well informed about the situation.

"No," said Willkie. "Frankly, I don't think so. I believe the censors ought to permit more news to get out."

After that, Willkie went to the desert in a United States Army catch-as-catch-can uniform. He didn't make a very good-looking soldier, but nobody would have minded that, had he stuck to his strictly amateur role. He became an authority on higher strategy after a few hours' visit to the battle front where a few bombs fell near enough for him to see the columns of dust they raised and to hear them burst.

Reporters at the front met him in a large assembly tent which General Montgomery uses for staff conferences. It was hot, close, and quiet.

The first question was: "Well, Mr. Willkie, how do you like our desert?"

As though the question had released a secret spring, Willkie dived into this speech: "The battle which has just been won is perhaps one of the most decisive in history. It is comparable to the Battle of the Nile, when Nelson destroyed the French Fleet. Egypt is saved. The threat to the Nile Valley has been removed!"

Correspondents, conditioned to understatement by vigilant censorship, gaped at Willkie. They hadn't known there'd been a battle going on at all. They knew the enemy had attacked on August 30, but this was September 5. Here, then, was news—hot, perishable stuff. They rushed it through typewriters; dispatch riders took it to press headquarters—but all in vain. Willkie had overstated the importance of the battle. Egypt had been saved, but the salvation process had begun long before this new battle had started, and still the threat to Egypt remained and wouldn't be removed until Rommel's armies either were destroyed or chased out of Egypt and Libya.

Willkie had the censors on a spot. They were obliged to choose between pruning his utterances down to reasonable terms (thereby risking offending him) or allowing Berlin to get valuable propaganda material, because Berlin knew as well as the British that what had happened in the desert wasn't exactly comparable to Nelson's victory.

If the British censors had allowed Willkie's statement to go out, Berlin could have assumed that the statement came directly from British officers who had conducted him to the front. And Goebbels would have had a great chuckle.

The rest of the press conference went thus: A correspondent asked, "Were you bombed, Mr. Willkie?"

"Well, yes, yes, I was bombed."

"Was it high-level bombing, Mr. Willkie?"

"Yes, but you've got to expect that sort of thing."

Men who'd been strafed, bombed, dive-bombed, shelled and machine-gunned smiled to themselves.

Willkie returned to his original theme—the importance of the British victory over the Afrika Korps.

"The past two days constitute the turning point of the war," he said. "I can't stress too strongly that it's due to the brilliant tactical generalship of General Montgomery. I want you fellows who write for the papers back home to stress particularly that General Montgomery is a fighting Irishman from South Ireland."

With that, Willkie grabbed his sola topee, slammed it on his head with the chin strap under the crown, so that it fitted none too well. The reporters wrote what Willkie had said, with prayers that General Bernard Law Montgomery, a tall, modest man of few words, wouldn't mind.

Willkie's next major public appearance was back in Cairo at a cocktail party in the South African Club, arranged by a Free Frenchman named André Glarner and a newspaperman, Alec Small, of the *Chicago Tribune*.

A Willkie henchman went about asking correspondents

whether the reporters out on the desert had sent in stories about Willkie's pronouncements there. He demonstrated considerable anxiety about the kind and amount of publicity that Willkie was getting.

British press relations officers were at the party. One correspondent told Willkie that his overzealous words on the desert had been severely censored by the British. Angry, Willkie set his chin, leaned forward into a group of newspapermen, and said, in the hearing of the British officers, "God damn it, boys, nobody's got the right to censor anything I say! I'm a responsible person. Nobody's got any right to censor me—and I mean nobody!"

Then, raising his voice slightly and addressing himself to a monocled lieutenant colonel, Willkie went on, "You can tell that to anybody, and I mean anybody you like—I mean it."

A correspondent saved the situation slightly by saying that that was the way he felt about anything he said, too, whereupon everyone laughed nervously. Willkie posed for several photographs, shook hands with people, and left.

In Ankara, where they are sticklers for diplomatic protocol, President Inönü of Turkey was conveniently away when Willkie arrived there. There's an unbreakable rule in Turkey that all official receptions must be held in Ankara. Inönü's absence obviated meeting Willkie, although we were given to understand in Cairo that Wendell carried a personal message to Inönü from Roosevelt, as he did for King Farouk, Chiang Kai-shek, and other heads of states.

The Iranians don't like their loyalty to Great Britain questioned. Whoever briefed Willkie for this flight into international affairs, however, neglected to tell him about that. When he reached Bagdad he committed one of the major blunders of his journey. He saw General Nuri.

Said Willkie after his interview: "I had a long and deep discussion with Premier General Nuri. There's no doubt we've got a friend there—his heart's right in it."

The implication read into this by Arabs and others in the Middle East was that, abroad, there had been some doubt concerning Nuri's loyalty.

I wrote the story of Wendell Willkie's visit to the Middle East for my paper substantially as reported above. Willkie went on to Moscow and Chungking. While there and later he made a number of critical and helpful observations concerning the paucity of American help for China and Russia.

His words captured the imagination of all those who felt we were doing little for China and not enough for Russia. He won to his banner all those who saw hesitancy and mismanagement in the conduct of the war in Washington. Even those Liberals who recalled so vividly his utilities affiliations in 1940 were ready to forgive him now, and I returned home shortly before General Ike Eisenhower invaded the Mediterranean to be soundly criticized as a muckraker and a mud-flinger by the press of the Middle West and by my Liberal friends.

What I wrote in Cairo still stands. I reported Mr. Willkie's behavior exactly as I saw it and, if anything, I was prejudiced in his favor. I wrote the article as I did because that's the way the facts fell into the typewriter. I simply do not believe in the perpetuation of our hang-a-halo school of journalism. The press has fallen into evil ways in presenting public characters to the people. Everything possible is done to hide public men's faults and to extol real or imagined virtues.

Reporting has become press-agentry where it concerns individuals. I had not then (when I wrote what I did about Mr. Willkie in Cairo) and I have not now, any intention of contributing to the brand of newspapering to which I refer. Such ballyhooing journalism built up Cal Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Charlie Lindbergh, and Captain Eddie Rickenbacker.

Mr. Willkie may be a great man in spite of what I saw of him in Cairo. I believe he is. I shall never forget his speech

accepting the Republican candidacy for President. It was a noble and a brave speech.

In everything he has said since his return from his hasty around-the-world survey of military and political affairs in the Middle East, Russia, and China, there is implicit a new and greater Willkie, perhaps a new and greater G.O.P., and perhaps a new party altogether, one which will meet the exigencies of internationalism rather than merely the nationalism traditionally associated with the Republican party.

I cannot leave the subject without placing on Mr. Willkie's credit side of the ledger the possibility that while he was in the Middle East he tried to tell us reporters something we should have known but were denied by the stupid, authoritarian, and utterly arbitrary press officers in Africa. Willkie might have been trying to tell us we were about to see the beginning of a workmanlike effort to clear the Mediterranean of the enemy. If we had been more perceptive, more of us would have got the hint. To my knowledge, only one did, the able Mr. Ed Kennedy, correspondent of the Associated Press. But while Ed merely sensed that Willkie was trying to "tell us something," he hadn't the foggiest notion of what it was. And neither did I. I thought an invasion of West Africa designed to secure Dakar and, possibly, Casablanca was imminent. There had been reports of American troops landing in the Congo and massing in British West Africa for a concerted assault on important Dakar. I hopped a plane for Accra via Khartoum to try to meet the new thrust which, I believed, might be the beginning of a second front in Africa.

En route, a British friend tried to induce me to leave the plane at Lake Chad in French Equatorial Africa where, he said, the French had little food but 2,000 cases of good Scotch whisky. Had I done so, I would have caught Ike Eisenhower's invasion and Rommel's rout. The futile days on the malaria coast convinced me I had been a fool not to take my British friend's advice. When Eisenhower struck, I was 4,000 miles away.

CHAPTER XXI

Variations on a Theme

I DID NOT have high confidence in the rumors that a “second front” was to be opened in *West Africa*. American Negro troops had landed in Liberia and some had been sent to the Belgian Congo. These were not, however, combat troops. An invasion from that direction, despite the urgency of the occupation and control of strategic Dakar, was not indicated either in the quantity and type of troops we were then sending to Africa or in what information was available in Cairo. I prepared to proceed westward with misgivings, but I would be en route to New York and from there could proceed either to England, if my editors desired, or to whatever theater looked promising from a news viewpoint.

In Cairo at the end of October, two weeks before General Ike Eisenhower and his forces were to land in Casablanca, Oran, and on the Tunisian peninsula, there wasn’t a shred of public or private information even of the “usually reliable” variety to forecast what occurred on November 8. We knew the British were preparing for an offensive, perhaps a definitive one this time, against Rommel. We didn’t know when it would break. The British, incidentally, kept their own secret well. They kept the press corps fully informed concerning the weaknesses of the enemy and the difficulties he was having with transportation, communications, and supplies. But never a word regarding our own rapidly rising power.

It was patent, however, from what we could see at Suez

and in the rear areas of Alexandria and in the desert between Cairo and Alexandria that we had grown enormously stronger. The enemy, on the other hand, had been seriously weakened. We were informed, for instance, that the intake port of Tobruk, where Rommel received approximately 4,700 tons of supplies daily, had been so heavily bombed by our planes that he could take off from his ships less than 400 tons a day. By the end of October the Afrika Korps and its Italian drones were in extremely reduced circumstances. They were able to obtain less than 10 per cent of the supplies and munitions they required to maintain themselves in the field. They were, therefore, in an extremely vulnerable position.

The British suppressed all speculation as to whether or not the Eighth Army would attack. Even the mildest reference in our dispatches to the growing strength of the Army was censored. One of the best-guarded pieces of news was the arrival of the General Sherman tanks and our 105-millimeter self-propelled gun, the weapons which, with our planes, were to prove decisive against Rommel when, finally, the offensive was launched by Commander in Chief General Sir Harold Alexander, a spare little man with a shooting-box manner but a tough spirit.

At about the time the Shermans began coming, an unusual incident occurred. The late Uncle Danny Pienaar called our attention to it when George Lait, Chester Morrison, and I visited him in his portable hut in the sand dunes somewhere east of Tel El Eisa. We were bombed that morning. A few 500-pounders fell close to the hut. My memory may be playing me tricks, but I seem to remember that Danny didn't seem to hear the explosions—three—and at one moment in the brief raid turned to straighten a picture of his daughter which he'd inadvertently bumped with his elbow.

Danny had a Cairo newspaper laid on his table, opened and folded to a page containing an advertisement for Christmas cards. The ad showed a picture of a tank whose profile was

roughly but unmistakably one of our Shermans. The tank's gun was in the turret. Out of the turret emerged an overburdened Santa Claus whose right hand was pointing to the tank's principal weapon. From Santa's bag, letters spilled out. Some were stamped and others weren't. The first seven spilling from the bag were stamped. Then there were many un-stamped, and then five others with markings in the corners to indicate stamps.

"Seven and five," Uncle Danny said in his slow, full, precise voice. "That's seventy-five, and Santa's pointing to the gun and what does that mean but to indicate a 75-millimeter gun?"

"And look at the sprockets. There are a certain number of teeth missing. Three are missing in the front-drive sprocket and eight from the rear idler. That happens to be the number of the first batch which arrived at Suez, thirty-eight."

It was the best possible evidence of how efficiently, but in this case how amateurishly, the Axis fifth column within Egypt functioned. An investigation was immediately started to ascertain how the cut got into the paper, who offered it for publication, et cetera, but I didn't remain in Cairo long enough to learn its outcome. At least one spy ring, however, was discovered; its members were arrested while I was there. Its alleged leader was a dancer who performed a *danse du ventre* nightly at the Continental Roof of the Continental-Savoy Hotel. She had slept with most of the officers and others who frequented the place and, undoubtedly, had considerable information to sell as well as one of the handsomest bodies in Egypt. She had disgustingly black hair which was always too oily and her clothes, no matter how well cut, were always soiled.

You have read much, no doubt, concerning Commando raids. Those you read most about are the ones which come off successfully. There have been many which misfired. One of these occurred while I was with the British in Egypt. Larry

Allen, one of the best reporters in the craft, was captured on this particular one. It was a Commando raid on Tobruk. A small percentage of the large force involved ever came back. And this was because, some ten days before the raid was to occur, somebody talked in a bar in Alexandria. Larry was with the landing force when he was taken and it is only by chance that he is alive, if a prisoner, today.

On the whole, however, security was good in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, compared to the free-and-easy days of 1939, 1940, and 1941. I disagree with the *New York Times*'s eminent military authority, Mr. Hanson Baldwin, that the invasion of the Mediterranean was one of the worst-kept secrets of the war. In Africa and Egypt where, certainly, there might have been a "leak" regarding the events of November 8, there was perfect security. I doubt if even General Russell Maxwell, then commanding officer of the American Forces in North Africa, had any inkling of what was to come. If he did, he played his role of complete ignorance perfectly. His poker face at press conferences told us less than the dead pan of one of the best poker players in the business, General Tooey Spaatz. I have that on the word of one Mr. Quentin Reynolds, who's not so bad himself, as many, including Mr. Randolph Churchill, will testify. Randolph has many good qualities, but playing poker isn't one of them.

Certainly General Alexander and General Bernard Law Montgomery, commander of the Eighth, must have known of the plans for the invasion of the Mediterranean. Yet not only did the British maintain utmost secrecy as to what was to happen on November 8, but they succeeded in misleading most of us completely on the possibilities of a British attack on Rommel. At one press conference the DMI, the Director of Military Intelligence, so phrased his answers to our questions as to cause some of the correspondents to conclude there would be no action in the Middle East for many months to come, perhaps not until May, and this was October. The DMI

didn't lie, and close scrutiny and evaluation of his remarks led others to the opposite conclusion, but I wish to give you an example of the utter confusion of the majority of the press corps at that particular time.

At least three of us were not taken in. Lait, Morrison, and I were convinced that the British would attack, and soon. They did, and in thirteen short weeks they drove Rommel out of Egypt and out of Libya, starting at Tel El Eisa and winding up in Tunisia. That campaign I leave for someone else to describe. I wasn't there, much to my disgust.

There are, however, several observations I believe my experience with the British armies in the Middle East permits me to make on the campaign. In the process I do not wish to detract from the brilliant performance of General Montgomery, an ascetic little man who talks like a Britisher but does not behave like one. General Montgomery, like all officers, is a great soldier until proved otherwise. At the moment he stands in public esteem where General Beauregard stood after Bull Run.

Consider, first of all, the time element in the sequence of events in North Africa. The British started their drive against Rommel late in October. For about a fortnight Rommel held; the British gained a few yards a day at great cost in men and material. From the early days of the fighting I could draw only one major comfort—Rommel was bleeding profusely.

Then, on November 6 (and probably much before, knowing Cairo censorship to be what it is), Rommel began his long, costly retreat. Anywhere from twenty-four to seventy-two hours prior to the start of the retreat Rommel must certainly have been advised of the entry into the Mediterranean of the substantial American forces. Enemy submarines had undoubtedly picked up the several convoys Africa-bound from the United States and England and reported the tonnage involved, the type of ships, and possible direction. By the time the convoys were off the mouth of the Middle Sea and the

coasts of Africa the enemy had a fairly accurate idea of what was happening. Rommel was advised, and Rommel, in order to avert total disaster in North Africa, had to retreat.

I do not believe Rommel's retreat was totally strategic, but I also do not believe it is accurate to attribute his rout in Egypt and Cyrenaica and Libya altogether to General Montgomery's prowess, great as that may be. Moreover, General Montgomery, with untypical language for a British commander, promised to "destroy" the Afrika Korps. This, unfortunately, he did not completely succeed in accomplishing. Rommel succeeded in reaching the Tunisian peninsula with the remnants of his battered army. He saved most of his 90th Light Infantry, his two panzer divisions, and several Italian divisions. From air photographs which I have studied it is obvious that his retreat was not altogether a rout, Montgomery's victory not quite an annihilation. In the proportion at least that these observations are correct, what happened in North Africa in the fortnight up to November 7-8 was as much an Eisenhower victory as it was a defeat of Rommel and a triumph for Montgomery. Add to this consideration the large proportion of American equipment which went into the victorious North African formula and, I feel, you will have a better appreciation of the magnitude of America's and Democracy's contribution to the African campaign.

I don't believe anyone can stress too greatly the need, more particularly abroad than at home, perhaps, for a greater appreciation of the enormity of America's contribution to victory. It is difficult to foresee what, militarily, the United Nations can accomplish to surpass the politico-military effort of the Russians. It will be difficult enough to match it. It may be impossible to surpass it. As we go to press we can offer only a Tripoli to vie in the imaginations of confused peoples everywhere with the accomplishments of the Russians at Stalingrad and Leningrad and Kharkov and Rostov. We can't even shout too loudly, "Hurrah for Guadalcanal!" for, great as the defeat

of the Japs there might seem to us, the forces and losses involved were insignificant compared to sacrifices of the Russians at almost any point in their resistance against the Germans.

The Russians and their ideology have challenged the rest of the world, more particularly those members of the United Nations—Great Britain and the United States—upon whom most directly the burden of Democratic victory over Nazism and Fascism rests. Unless the contribution to that victory is comparable and demonstrably as great as that made by the Russians, inevitably people everywhere will attribute the ultimate triumph over the enemy to Communist ideology. And in the same measure the moral and spiritual and political forces at work at the moment of triumph will determine the shape of the peace as they will determine the internal individual character of nations and, therefore, the character of the world to come.

Of the world's major revolutions those which have most profoundly affected the course of human events have been the American, the French, and the Russian. With the fall of Stalingrad it became clear that the survival of Democracy depended upon whether or not Democracy is equal to the challenge. Unless there is a resurgence of Democratic fervor and concomitant assertion on the field of battle the field, very clearly, belongs to Communism or to whatever may emerge from modifications in the policies and practices of both.

All that I have said I have stated humbly and without claim to omniscience. I am well aware of how wrong I might be. I am a reporter, and fallible. But I have seen this war on many battlefields and have been, since its outbreak and while it was still being made, in every country of Europe, in Africa, and in the Orient, traveling almost constantly for nearly ten years. What I have said here is a distillate of what I have observed in those countries and regions and what I have learned from their men and women and soldiers.

I return to America this year with renewed confidence in

our ability to win the war, but with a renewed conviction, too, that we still have a long way to travel to win it politically and spiritually. There is still much inefficiency and bungling to overcome. Despite these obstructions we will win, and are already winning, militarily. Politically, I am afraid, and spiritually, if you like, we are not doing so well as we might. We seem to forget that politics and war are indivisible. We seem too ready to accept a small military victory as a complete victory. Certainly the political events in North Africa, after General Eisenhower's landing, bear out the fallacy of such thinking. Before I contribute what modest little I can to the political facts of the North African campaign, however, I must take you to Madagascar. The operations there were a capsule politico-military preview of what Eisenhower was ultimately confronted with in Tunisia and Algiers.

CHAPTER XXII

Appeasement in Madagascar

BETWEEN Cape St. Andrew on the west coast of Madagascar and the city of Mozambique at the easternmost bulge of Portuguese East Africa, the sea lane known as Mozambique Channel narrows to two hundred miles. Two hundred and fifty miles north, the Comoro Islands dominate the channel where it widens into the Indian Ocean. The waters bounded on the west by Portuguese East Africa, on the north by the islands which divide Mozambique Channel into hundred-mile lanes, and on the east by Madagascar, have become the war's new danger zone for Allied shipping.

The enemy has carried on unrestricted assault on the Allied supply lines to the battlefields of the Middle East and Russia precisely where round-the-Cape life lines from England and the United States merge, thicken, and pass through Mozambique Channel.

The first Axis attack in the spring of 1942 on this main artery of water-borne traffic confirmed the pattern, if confirmation were needed, of what was then Axis strategy. This was, and to some degree still is, to batter down resistance in the Middle East and southeastern Russia before undertaking the conquest of India where Germany and Japan hoped to join forces.

Recent events in North Africa and the Caucasus have, of course, materially altered the Axis tactics although not, necessarily, Axis strategy. It is very likely that Japan will soon

attack Russia to relieve the Germans in the West and perhaps permit the Nazis to resume the initiative in the summer of 1943.

The success of the Axis in that eventuality, however, still will depend heavily upon its ability to puncture that Allied supply artery through the Mozambique Channel.

After the debacles in Malaya and Burma, Britain foresaw the dangers to northbound round-the-Cape traffic. Huge Madagascar, with its deeply indented and remote coasts, obviously could provide strategic bases for Japan's submarine raiders and supply ships. Britain moved in on Vichy-controlled Madagascar without benefit of De Gaulle.

Seizure of the naval base of Diégo-Suarez was well planned and well executed. French officials crept under their mosquito nets on the night of May 4, 1942, and awoke on the morning of May 5 to find themselves the prisoners of daring Commando troops and Marines. But the British failed to carry through their initial success. So, while Rommel pounded Ritchie's Eighth Army to pieces in Egypt and the Germans reduced Sevastopol, desperately needed reinforcements and equipment destined for the Allied battlefields were sunk by enemy submarines lurking in Mozambique Channel. They were able to do so because Madagascar was neither occupied nor controlled by the British who held territory on the island only in the vicinity of Diégo-Suarez. The Allied foothold on Madagascar was then relatively as large as a postage stamp on a large envelope. Appeasement again. And appeasement had brought about a situation which not only menaced the security of Madagascar itself, but of the Union of South Africa, too, and, therefore, the safety of the African continent as well.

South Africa's Smuts, however, knew that Madagascar wasn't merely a potential Axis base for harassing Allied shipping in the channel. He realized that it constituted a potential enemy base for direct attack on the Union. He knew, too, that the British failures in Madagascar were not merely political

but that they had also made a number of military blunders such as, for instance, sending troops into that malaria-infested island without proper equipment for defense against mosquitoes!

But neither military nor internal nor external political difficulties worried Smuts. That pious, unsweating old gentleman shouted: "I don't give a damn about politics involved or whether De Gaulle should or shouldn't have led the attack on the island, or whether the residents thereon are with us or against us or anything else. What we've got to have is the whole of Madagascar." But the task Smuts faced wasn't easy. His troops found more armed resistance than anticipated. In Cairo I had learned that the Japanese were arming natives on the island, where there were some 40,000 of military age who had done routine service. Moreover, an internal political situation had developed on the island, following Britain's unexploited military coup, that further complicated the job of occupation.

The gist of this political tangle was this: Following the capture and occupation of Diégo-Suarez, the British sought to win over some 4,000 French civil servants and businessmen with offers of trade favors. After a brilliant military maneuver London reverted to a policy of appeasement and peaceful penetration which failed and which gave the Axis two valuable months to stiffen up Vichy-French resistance to Democracy's blandishments. Here's how it happened.

First, Madagascar is almost big enough to be called an island continent. One of the world's biggest islands, it is nearly a thousand miles long, almost four hundred miles at its widest point, with mountain peaks as high as 9,490 feet.

It is rich in graphite, mica, corundum, and phosphates, stocked with cattle, and lush with rice, coffee, sisal, and fruit. Its mineral and agricultural wealth insured that Vichy wouldn't yield Madagascar without offering the Axis every possible opportunity to help prevent its occupation by the

United Nations as well as seeking to stir up local opposition among the island's 40,000 Europeans and 3,758,338 Indo-Melanesian natives.

Madagascar is roughly shaped like a Dutch shoe with a flat, straight sole. On its northern toe lies Diégo-Suarez—a harbor split by four promontories into the shape of a four-leafed clover with a narrow entrance guarded by naval guns ranging in size from six and one half to eleven inches. The port itself, except for huge anchorage facilities, isn't much, its three-hundred-and-fifty-foot wharf, with a couple of ancient steam-driven cranes, being capable merely of berthing a small freighter or two. The floating dry dock could just about accommodate a 4,000-ton steamer, and the whole business does not constitute anything like the naval base that desk-side experts back home described.

A road runs from Diégo-Suarez along the vamp of the Dutch shoe to the west-coast port called Majunga, winds up the plateau to the capital, Tananarive, and continues south to the southern extremity of the island with branches coming up from Tamatave and Fort Dauphin, east-coast ports, and from Morondava and Tulear on the west coast. There's one dinky railroad running from Tamatave to the capital, but there are plenty of good airports all over the island within bombing range of Nairobi, Mombasa, Durban, and Cape Town.

Madagascar's climate is more typically African than Africa's, with as much as one hundred inches of rain and with jungle heat. This means fevers and, for white men, as lazy a life as possible.

For the most part, Frenchmen on the island marked time, drawing government pay against the day when they would be retired and returned to *La Belle France*.

This was an important political factor. Frenchmen on Madagascar, the Allies had good reason to believe, were sympathetic to the Allied cause. But at the same time they couldn't openly come out for De Gaulle. To do so would imperil their

government pay, their pensions, their retirements. Had they been spared the pain of making a choice they'd have welcomed the occupation and co-operated fully with the Allies.

May 4 had been hotter than usual, with threatening thunder in the sultry monsoon, and Diégo-Suarez's guardians, particularly Vichy's commandant, Captain Mertens, went to bed satisfied that Diégo-Suarez was impregnable even against eastern attack through Courier Bay, which bites deeply into Diégo-Suarez Peninsula and provides beaches for landing an enemy force.

Courier Bay is protected by a treacherous coral reef and dominated by a hill whose rough outlines so closely resemble the traditional home of English kings that it was named Windsor Castle. Canny Mertens mounted a battery of 6½-inch guns on the hill's thousand-foot summit, and thereby turned, he thought, the key in the lock of the back door. He felt that only a fool or a madman would attempt to lead a fleet into Courier Bay by night, for he'd mined the bay too. There wasn't any watch, therefore, on Windsor Castle the night of May 4 as heat-bedeviled Frenchmen torpidly rolled into their beds.

Off the arc of reefs guarding the entrance to Courier Bay, however, a small sailship hovered. There was a tall, lean officer beside the tiller, wearing the zigzag gold braid of a lieutenant of the British Royal Naval Reserve. It's a military secret how he came to be there, but he knew every point in the reef, every mark and sounding as intimately as Leatherstocking knew Cooper's woods, and he knew, too, the location of the bay's mines.

The lieutenant was waiting at the rendezvous. He listened, heard nothing; looked and saw nothing though he had conditioned his eyes to see in the dark for months, preparing for that night's work. He knew no more than his orders; he hadn't any means of confirming whether those he awaited would

keep the appointment. At last came the signal lamp of the British destroyer appointed to lead the British Fleet and merchantmen carrying 25,000 troops.

The destroyer answered his confirmation signal and followed the lieutenant's vessel in, dropping buoys showing a dim blue light seaward. Once inside the reef, mine sweepers came in, swept the channel and bay, and assault vessels and troop carriers got within effective range of land.

Mertens was awakened on the gray morning of the fifth when fleet air-arm machines bombed his airdrome, destroying his seven bombers and a handful of Potez fighters. Courier Bay's battery never spoke. Their crews found themselves with the stilettos of Commando troops at their gizzards.

A hundred Britons died; at least three hundred were wounded in the forty-eight hours of fighting which ensued. We'll know someday what the defenders' losses were, but nearly 3,000 were captured, including five hundred French sailors and officers. Mertens and the entire Diégo-Suarez provincial administration were captured. That was the brilliant beginning. According to plan, the second half of the job of the shock troops who captured Courier Bay and its battery would have been the seizure of Tamatave. They'd lost only two or three men, were in full strength, and itching to plunge ahead. They'd have been largely unopposed, because the French had concentrated the greater part of their strength on Diégo-Suarez Peninsula, and organized resistance had broken with the capture of the harbor defenses. But the Commandos were condemned at the last moment merely to police the occupied ground. The British attack simmered down mysteriously to the broadcasting of propaganda.

Vichy counterpropaganda was exceedingly clever. French-language broadcasts emanating from Tananarive were non-committally banal and could, by stretching points, be construed as favorable to the Allies.

But the Malagasy broadcasts to the natives from the same

station were calculated to arouse resistance throughout the island. At least one regiment of the French Foreign Legion was in the interior. An Englishman with twenty years of experience and intimate knowledge of the Malagasy language told me these broadcasts persistently call on natives to fight the "enemies of France" and rally men to the colors. Broadcasts supplemented bulletins posted in villages advising chiefs to rally in defense of the island. From the day when the British might have overrun the island at will, Madagascar's Vichyites built up considerable resistance, military and political.

This centered around Governor Armand Annet, hand-picked Laval man placed in strategic Madagascar six months after the collapse of France because his predecessor was an Anglophile. Chief of the island's civil servants, and as anxious to insure his pay and pension as his subordinates, he referred every British overture to Laval, and it's a simple guess what Laval replied. The British, however, refrained from bombing Tananarive and other broadcasting stations which made this buck-passing possible. Annet shrewdly saw to it that the British were unable to capitalize on the smoldering native resentment of French deposal of Madagascar's queen in 1896, exercising his authority through the Foreign Legion and 2,000 Senegalese regulars and a score of economic pressures at his command.

But the swivel-chair strategists in Whitehall continued to insist in all seriousness that the French feared arming the natives, when military and naval people having direct knowledge—they captured two Japanese officers on the island in the Diégo-Suarez raid—insisted that the enemy could come to support Annet's garrison whenever their plans so required. Continuance of a policy of appeasement meant continuance of sinkings in Mozambique Channel and time for the Axis to work out plans to supply arms to the natives and anti-Britons.

London seemed convinced that the baksheesh policy would work. This policy was to be to trade the manufactured goods

the island requires in exchange for the island's loyalty to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, enemy raiders and submarines, accompanied by supply ships, openly operated in Mozambique Channel. There was no proof that either raiders or submarines were directly based on the heavily indented Madagascan coast. But there's no proof either (and this I know from conversations with shipwrecked captains of American, Greek, and Dutch ships arriving in Lourenço Marques) that the Allies were maintaining adequate patrols against raiders.

So if the British could not spot assailants, how could they be certain that the Madagascan coast wasn't being used for bases? Moreover, there were plenty of coastwise dhows, which used to be engaged in trade as far north as the Persian Gulf ports and all along the African east coast, and were now idle. They would be glad to furnish submarines and raiders with food, water, and Diesel oil at rendezvous on the reefy island archipelagos spread along the channel.

One of the most important overtones of the political phases involved in Madagascar concerned De Gaulle. The attackers had strictest orders not to mention De Gaulle when they took Diégo-Suarez. This was to be purely a British venture. The reason is that in Madagascar, as elsewhere in the French colonies, De Gaulle, though admired as a military genius, wasn't popular, and the Free French movement politically pivoted on his tall, cold, un-French figure was doomed to failure. It was his hesitancy to kill what he called fellow Frenchmen that balked the first Dakar expedition and complicated the occupation of Djibouti, which had informed London it was willing to play ball but without De Gaulle.

It was a shock for the Commandos to listen to London's British Broadcasting Corporation shortly after Diégo-Suarez was captured and hear that the Free French were co-operating. Perhaps De Gaulle had interfered again. Perhaps, said disgusted naval and army officers, the policy of sweet reasonable-

ness which London had undertaken regarding Madagascar was again due to De Gaulle's insistence on his pound of propaganda flesh.

Concerning British policy in Madagascar, one escaped Frenchman said, "What the British are doing is manifestly unfair. Instead of forcing a decision upon islander Frenchmen by a military *fait accompli* and compelling them to collaborate, the British are asking them to forego voluntarily their allegiance to a government which at the moment has every card in its hand. The only way those people can be influenced to make a voluntary change is for a United Nations' victory somewhere to put the issue of the war beyond all doubt, for no matter how much those of us who love Democracy may be certain of victory, little Madagascan officials have many misgivings."

Madagascar, like so many other problems faced by the Democracies in the last three years, was a purely military one. But the British couldn't resist trying appeasement just once more. It must be said to their everlasting credit, however, that once they conquered and occupied the whole of the island the British did the decent thing and turned the prize over to De Gaulle who, no matter what else he may be, is nevertheless a Frenchman who stands for a Free France, a man with clean hands and a clean soul. Once the question of a choice was removed from Frenchmen's minds, they readily accepted De Gaulle as they would have done in Algiers. We, however, chose appeasement, of a kind, for reasons unfathomable.

Madagascar should have taught us much. It gave us a pattern for action in North Africa. But we did not follow it. We made precisely the same errors which the British made in the early phase of the Madagascan campaign but, unlike the British, we did not choose to acknowledge and correct those mistakes.

CHAPTER XXIII

Too Many Flags

I SAW MUCH in Africa, the Middle East, and in portions of South America to confirm the thesis that we shall win the war in the military sense. I saw little, however, to prove that we are winning it or shall win it politically.

What resistance there is to the Axis everywhere emanates largely from Democratic peoples, from men and women who want to choose for themselves their rulers and their own social and economic patterns for happiness. Their hopes for at least a reasonably secure future are pinned principally upon America. However, wherever these peoples come into contact with the British, it is to them they turn.

But both we and the British have given freedom-loving peoples everywhere cause to suspect our ultimate objectives. Setting aside, for the moment, our avowed intentions as set down in the Atlantic Charter, we have been clear on one point —our common Anglo-American desire to extirpate Nazism and Fascism.

Our “deal” with Darlan must therefore have shaken the faith of many whose faces turned to us ashine with hope. Not all of the sins of compromise and appeasement, however, have been committed exclusively by our State Department. The British Foreign Office is not completely guiltless. There was the little matter of the Yugoslavs.

British treatment of certain Yugoslav leaders who were responsible for their country’s eleventh-hour revolt against

the Fascist political machine of Milan Stojadinovich, which had allied itself with the Axis, was one of the several political enigmas I encountered in the Middle East. But first some background.

From 1937 onward, Yugoslavia moved steadily toward political collaboration with the Axis until in March 1941 the then-government of the nation signed a pact, tantamount to an all-inclusive alliance, with Rome and Berlin. Proportionately, in that period, the gulf between the government and the people had widened. Yugoslavs were intensely Democratic albeit almost as fanatically Nationalist. Beneath the woodpile of confusion there was a nigger. He was Paul, the regent prince. The adherents of Democracy knew where Paul stood. The Fascists weren't entirely certain of his loyalty to them but knew him to be a manageable opportunist interested primarily in keeping power in his hands.

Certain officers in the Yugoslav Army, however, opposed the drift toward the Axis. They held clandestine meetings, schemed and intrigued in the best Balkan tradition, but did little. Their attitude was, until the fateful spring of 1941, much that of a man who is faced with a desperate situation and keeps repeating to himself, "I've got to do something," but doesn't know exactly what to do. In this group were General Draja Mihailovich, General Boro Mirkovich, and Colonel Zharko Popovich. At least two of these, Mihailovich and Popovich, were anti-Communists.

Popovich was, nevertheless, sent to Russia as Yugoslavia's military attaché. His principal qualification for the job, aside from his undisputed military ability, was an amazing capacity for vodka. They say of him that he absorbs vodka as the sands soak up water. His charming ways opened many doors for him in Moscow and he obtained much information concerning the Russian war machine which he passed on to the British, who were very grateful and held him, consequently, in high esteem.

Mirkovich was an air-force general. He was esteemed in the air corps. On March 27, 1941, there occurred what, undoubtedly, was the biggest event in the history of the young, amorphous nation. Mirkovich had decided to oust the pro-German government responsible for the pact with the Axis. He called together air-force and army officers on the night of March 26 and made plans. He assigned missions to each of his trusted fellow conspirators. One was to take the post office, another the police headquarters, *et cetera*. A timetable was worked out and put into effect on the morning of the twenty-seventh. The coup came off successfully; little blood was spilled. One policeman was accidentally shot.

Paul, on that morning, was in a train en route to his country castle in Slovenia. At Zagreb his train was stopped by the police and he was advised there had been a palace rebellion, a *coup d'état* or something, nobody knew just what, and that he, as regent, should hurry back to Belgrade. He had his train routed to the Hungarian border instead. There he placed himself in the hands of British agents who got him out of Hungary, put him on a destroyer, and sent him to Kenya. He was a nephew of the late Czar of Russia. I last heard of him living in splendor in the lush British colony and giving enormous and highly alcoholic parties.

Mirkovich, for the moment, was in possession of power in Belgrade. He could have done as he pleased, even to making himself dictator. He decided, however, to put young King Peter on the throne as the move least calculated to stir up trouble. Peter was then eighteen years old. Mirkovich summoned the politicos and generals and asked General Richard Simovich, who was rolled out of bed for the occasion, to form a government.

Mirkovich believed Simovich to be a good fellow, trustworthy and widely respected. Mirkovich, however, overlooked Simovich's lack of political intestinal fortitude. Simovich at once sought to appease the strong pro-Nazi element

within the body politic. He consulted with Peter who, of course, knew nothing about politics. Simovich brought several avowed Nazis into the cabinet he formed, including a man named Nincich, former president of the Yugoslav German League. Simovich made Nincich Foreign Minister, which, as it turned out, was precisely what those who'd participated in the *coup d'état* hadn't wanted.

Nincich's appeasement effort failed, of course, to avert a German attack. The Nazis were going to attack anyhow. On April 6, 1941, they bombed Belgrade. Ten days later Yugoslavia ceased to exist.

General Mirkovich was for holding out in the mountain hideouts of Montenegro, but he didn't succeed in convincing anybody of the wisdom of his plan. On April 16 the Government capitulated to Germany and issued an order to the troops to submit and turn over all their arms to the Germans in good condition. This order was originated and transmitted by the Naziphiles appointed to office by the silly Simovich. A few, however, refused to obey these commands, enplaned in machines which were barely airworthy, and headed for England and Egypt. Several hundred succeeded in escaping in this fashion and in two motor torpedo boats. A submarine, built in 1900 and never (in the living memory of Yugoslavs) actually submerged since it joined the Yugoslav Navy after World War I, also escaped with as many refugees on board as could crowd in. The crew had decided not to surrender to the Germans and, when the submarine's skipper refused to accede to their demands to make for an Egyptian port, put him in irons and found another commander.

General Mirkovich was among those who escaped. It was he who arranged with the British to smuggle out the young King. In mid-April 1941, while the Nazis prepared to engulf all of the Balkans, Mirkovich landed in Egypt. The King soon followed. Popovich also escaped. Mihailovich remained behind to form his guerrillas and continue to fight.

Young King Peter and his government went on to London. Two ministers, one of these the same Yevtitch who had held posts in the pro-Axis government of Stojadinovich, went to America. General P. Illitch remained in Egypt as commander in chief of such Yugoslav forces as were there, totaling, perhaps, four hundred men.

The Yugoslav Air Force, after enormous difficulties, was slowly integrated into the British Royal Air Force. In this respect much progress, slow though it was, was made. Gradually the Yugoslavs and the Britons were getting to understand one another. In Egypt, a battalion was formed with about forty officers as a nucleus, and a large number of Italian prisoners of war who were really Slovenes brought under Italian domination with the ceding of Trieste to Italy after the last war.

Simovich, in London, embarked upon a policy of non-co-operation with the British. He did his best to prevent the organization of operational units in Cairo. His argument was that it was no good permitting the remaining Yugoslav troops to be "used up" as they would be needed in Yugoslavia after the war.

He had able fifth-column support from Major Zivan Knezevich, commander of the battalion in Egypt. The good major discouraged his troops from learning British methods. He told his men not to learn signaling, for instance. "If you do," the major admonished, "you'll certainly be made to fight." That he was "influenced" there is no doubt. But the British never learned or admitted they learned how or by whom Major Knezevich was suborned.

In December 1941 the Yugoslav Government-in-exile "fell." Simovich went out. The new Prime Minister was the elderly, respectable, and slightly goofy Professor Dr. Tovanovitch. The pro-German Nincich, however, remained in office. And here began the intrigues of the brothers Knezevich, intrigues

which the State Department in Washington must take into full cognizance in dealing with the perplexities of relations between Washington and the Yugoslavs. The aforementioned Major Zivan Knezevich and one brother, Nicolai, wangled passage from Egypt to England. The third brother, Radoje, was already in England as "Court Chamberlain." He had gone to England before the Government "fell."

General Illitch, the commander in chief of Yugoslav forces in Egypt, almost immediately upon the reunion in London of the brothers Knezevich, received a telegram which said:

"You are pensioned under Yugoslav military law."

The particular section of the Yugoslav military code applying to pensions under which General Illitch was pensioned was one applicable only in cases of appallingly bad conduct.

"You will also put," the telegram continued, "Lieutenant Colonel Lozitch in your place as commander in chief."

This was indeed a bombshell. The pension action was illegal. Lozitch was the most junior of all the Yugoslav officers then in Egypt and was well known as an incompetent sycophant with an unprosecuted charge over his head of having embezzled quantities of public funds.

General Illitch immediately cabled London for confirmation of the order he had received, which had arrived unsigned. He received only cables in reply, without written confirmation. The aged Illitch became ill with worry. He debated at length whether he should obey or hand over the command to Boro Mirkovich, a man of proved personal courage, a national hero dating from the Balkan Wars of 1912-18 and the organizer of the *coup d'état* which had given Yugoslavia a hold on hope in a hopeless world in March 1941. General Illitch, too weak to stand, too ill to do more than sign the necessary papers, handed over his command to Boro Mirkovich. All hell broke loose. From London, *visaed and approved by the British Government*, came confirmation of the order removing Illitch and replacing him with the good-for-nothing

Lozitch. Eighty per cent of the Yugoslav officers in Egypt wrote to British authorities denouncing the action and refusing to serve under Lozitch. The reply of the British Foreign Office was:

“The Yugoslav Government is recognized by us and we have got to accept any action it chooses to take.”

Mirkovich withdrew and left the field to Lozitch. A prolonged tussle over the fate of the Yugoslavs began. The British Foreign Office, apparently more interested in supporting the Royalist elements rather than those who had risked their lives and futures in the coup, found itself at odds with the British Command in the Middle East.

General Auchinleck, then in command, wanted the matter cleared up quickly so that the available Yugoslav troops could be integrated into the British fighting forces. It was obvious to Auchinleck that those who'd escaped to Egypt to fight again were really on Democracy's side while those Yugoslavs in power in London were either Naziphiles or opportunists seeking to feather their own pillows. He knew, too, that Mirkovich was the hero of the exiles, ranking in their esteem at least on a par with Mihailovich. General Robert Stone, former British Military Attaché in Rome and now chief of the British Military Mission to Egypt, an able officer and an astute diplomat, was appointed temporary commander of the Yugoslav Army in Egypt.

The arrival in Cairo of one M. Rakitch provided the material for another scene in the Yugoslav drama which might have been *opéra bouffe* had it not been so tragic in its overtones. Rakitch had for years been aide-de-camp to King Peter. Peter, however, had not sat on the throne. He was a minor. In effect, therefore, Rakitch had been aide-de-camp not to Peter but to Regent Paul. On March 27, 1941, Rakitch had tried to stop Mirkovich's coup and the latter had had Rakitch arrested as a fifth columnist.

The powerful Knezevich brothers, however, had smug-

gled Rakitch out of Yugoslavia. And here he was, in Cairo, announcing: "I am King Peter's plenipotentiary, with full powers." Asked for papers to prove his status, he wasn't able to produce any acceptable documents.

Unknown to them, General Stone had been opening all incoming mail addressed to the Yugoslavs. He turned up an interesting fact of which the Middle East GHQ had not been cognizant. Almost every piece of official paper coming into Cairo destined for Yugoslav sources bore the signature of one of the brothers Knezevich. Thus it was disclosed that the brothers Knezevich had gained control of the War Council, Yugoslav Military Intelligence, and Ministry of the Court. The Yugoslav Government was, therefore, in the hands of self-seeking persons who were intent upon purging from the Yugoslav Army in Egypt all pro-Democratic elements. Here was a situation which Auchinleck couldn't solve and which, while it endured, prevented the Yugoslavs from participating in the war effort and offered Nazi agents an excellent opportunity to plant adherents in the Yugoslav ranks if, indeed, any were needed. Auchinleck, after sending a blistering telegram to the Foreign Office, ordered all Yugoslavs interned.

"All the decent Yugoslavs in the Middle East," an important British officer told me in Cairo, "have been interned and are likely to remain so for the duration. At best the lot of them will be shipped off to Kenya and we will lose as friends those very ones who kicked the pro-Germans out of Yugoslavia, who are, in short, on our side, while those who aren't are living in luxury in London and in America intriguing for evil to come at the peace. It is a bloody mess."

I last saw Mirkovich in a dirty uniform digging trenches with his men outside Cairo when the Egyptian capital was threatened by Rommel in July 1942.

Under what flag do we fight? Perhaps I should say under what flags? Do we fight to restore a monarchy in Yugoslavia?

✓ Do we fight to restore a monarchy in Greece where Greeks fought several revolutions to rid themselves of monarchy? There is evidence that we do. Did Greeks fight the Italians and, later, the Germans, to restore to themselves a monarchy they never wanted? It isn't likely, is it? Do you remember what the Greeks did? Perhaps this will help to refresh your memory.

Of all the little nations of bewildered Europe that lay in the path of Axis domination of the doomed continent, only Greece loved Democracy so well as to fight for it vigorously enough to call what happened a war. It wasn't war in Holland; it was murder. It wasn't war in Belgium; it was a skirmish. In Poland, desperate though the resistance of the Poles had been, the German campaign proved an enormous exercise in panzer tactics.

Only the Greeks had a war for it.

All took their toll of the enemy. Holland, Belgium, Poland—even Norway—cost the Germans, and therefore the Axis, men and much equipment. But until Russia entered the war no foe inflicted such punishment on the Axis as the Greeks did upon the Italians, and later, with the help of the British, upon the Germans.

You can't put a calipers on what Greece did for the cause of Democracy and measure it accurately. The war isn't over yet. But it might have been over had it not been for the Greeks—not the Greek politicians and big businessmen. Many Greek politicians were Fascists, as the government of Premier Metaxas had been Fascist, patterned after the Fascist design even down to police methods of handling traffic. The big businessmen for the most part thought they could do business with Hitler. Some of the members of the Greek general staff had sold out to the Italians, and at least one important member of the Department of the Interior was a Nazi stooge.

But the Greek people—the goatherders and the tobacco

farmers, the winegrowers and the tenders of olive groves, the factory workers and the keepers of wineshops—the common people of Greece had no mind to do business with Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler. The night the Italians treacherously descended upon Greece from their long-established base in Albania—October 28, 1940—those people filled the village squares and the streets with their clamor: “Down with Fascism!”

They meant as much the Fascism that had been imposed upon them since the day Metaxas invented a Communist rebellion in the provinces, in August 1936, to seize power, suppress the constitution, close up the parliament and become dictator, as they meant the Fascism of the invader. It was to have been a victorious march to Athens for the Italians. Mussolini’s choice of the date October 28—anniversary of his Pullman-car “march” on Rome—indicated that, as did the bald fact that Italophile members of the Greek general staff had received enormous bribes in gold to induce their regiments to lay down their arms.

Metaxas heard the cries of the people. He was as shrewd a politician as he was an able general—perhaps one of the ablest officers of our times. He saw and seized the opportunity of going down in history as a paladin of Democracy rather than a despised dictator. He chose to fight.

And what was to have been another easy victory for Mussolini’s “invincibles,” those veterans of one-sided battles against unarmed natives in Ethiopia and barehanded Republicans in Spain, turned into a catastrophic defeat. The adjective is understatement. Italian Fascism, nourished for years on hypodermics of propaganda, on a sort of national Couéism of phony victories and false economics and catch phrases that included the one concerning Mussolini’s infallibility—“*Mussolini ha sempre razón* (Mussolini is always right)” —died in the mountain passes of Albania.

Fascism fed on glory. There was none for Fascist arms in

Greece. Fascism gorged on victory and met costly defeat in Greece. With the Greek debacle it dawned on even the stanchest Black Shirts that Mussolini was very definitely not always right. The decline of the Second Roman Empire that met its end on the sands of Libya began in Greece because Greeks loved freedom well enough to fight for it.

Something more the Greeks accomplished. Italy's mission in the Axis strategy in the Mediterranean region was to have been twofold: the Fascists were to have marched on Athens and thereby intimidated Yugoslavia, where the treacherous Stojadinovich had prepared the terrain for an Axis coup, into the New Order line-up. Turkey, which at the time leaned far toward Berlin, was to have been won over by this Fascist triumph, and the Fascists were also to have conquered Egypt. Marshal Rodolfo Graziani had an enormous Fascist army in Libya, which outnumbered Egypt's defenders by at least four to one.

But in the seven months the Greeks held the Italians and in the six or seven weeks that the Anglo-Greek forces held the Italo-German armies later, the Italian pincers on strategic Suez broke—both jaws crumbled. The Nazi general staff was obliged to replace these broken jaws, to deploy divisions in the Balkans and in Italy and in Libya. Germany's ally had failed, and Germany was obliged to delay the attack against Russia, already prepared in Rumania and Bulgaria.

Hitler attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. But Greek resistance in the Balkans, which inspired rebellion in Yugoslavia and further complicated matters for the Nazis, had given Russia an extra seven months' preparation. Moreover, Hitler was caught on the Russian plains by winter because his timetable was thrown off schedule by the Balkan campaign and the fighting in Libya where he was obliged to move at least three valuable armored divisions in addition to several motorized infantry divisions and hundreds of planes to stiffen the disintegrating Fascists. He might not have been frozen

in Russia had he been able to launch his invasion of Russia sooner than June 22.

Hitlerism, some believe, may die in Russia, but, if so, it received the mortal wound in the Balkans at the hands of the Greeks.

The Greeks are still fighting. Guerrilla resistance continues. Every day Greeks are shot as saboteurs. Thousands are dying in Greece from starvation and typhus every month. They could have spared themselves the tragedy that has befallen them by accepting the New Order placidly, as Austria did, and later Rumania and Hungary and Bulgaria. But they chose to have a war instead, with all that war means, for by the time the Greeks started fighting they had a fair idea of the hardships and bloodshed and sacrifices they would have to endure.

In Greece, Democracy was born and in Greece, Democracy has fought a struggle for survival through the centuries since the Romans conquered the Hellenes in 146 B.C. To evacuated Greek soldiers I met in Cairo and Alexandria, what happened in the spring of 1941 was part of the same old struggle. I've seen many évacués of many nationalities. Defeat and despair were plain in the faces of most of them. I saw neither in the level glances of the Greeks I met in Egypt. They'd come out only to fight again.

All this for a king?

There are too many flags. We have difficulties enough marching together under four flags, those of America, Russia, Great Britain, and China. Need we raise, too, those of Otto of Austria, George of Greece, Peter of Yugoslavia, and the petty standards of the Hungarians, the Poles, the Czechs, and others who represent the peoples of these nations only on their say-so?

Can there not be one Democratic flag?

In Washington a dangerous combination of reactionary politicians has assembled—a well-fed, well-manicured lot of

outs who want to be ins, who have fastened themselves onto the State Department hoping to be carried into power by our eventual Democratic victory. If they succeed in their many and separate projects we shall most certainly lose the peace and re-create the turbulent conditions which precipitated this war.

The State Department has been remarkably generous in admitting foreign politicians renowned in their own countries as anti-Democratic. Availing themselves of the hospitality of our nation, they confuse and subdivide the foreign-language groups in the United States. They dazzle our own snobs with their titles and drawing-room manners and further complicate an already complex problem.

The most prominent of these runaways and exiles is Otto von Hapsburg. But there are others. There is Tibor Eckhardt, once a Naziphile and friend of Adolf Hitler, who tells a convincing tale. He once convinced me of his love of Democracy, but the evidence to date is overwhelming that his influence in Hungary will be on the side of reaction rather than progress.

There is Milan Hodža, former Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, and there are a considerable number of Polish gentlemen, among them Ignacy Matuszewski and Ludwik Rajchman. In the group of super-lobbyists at work here is also a former President of Lithuania, Antanas Smetona. All are surrounded by minor politicos and agents. All, big shots and little, have one great and noble emotion in common—hatred of Communism. Adolf Hitler also hates Communism. The least of the many harms which the foreign super-lobbyists perpetrate is the one of further dividing us from the second of our two major allies, Russia.

How do they work?

Otto von Hapsburg recently confidentially addressed the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee and later repeated his plea for his restoration before a select audience in the Library of

Congress. To truly Democratic Hungarians and Austrians, Czechs and Yugoslavs, such cordial treatment of one they detest is bitter and disillusioning medicine.

Restoration of the Hapsburgs would be a mortal blow to the future independent existence of Hungary and Yugoslavia. They must be wondering, between pangs of hunger in Budapest and Belgrade, whether Democracy and self-determinism in politics are a real war aim of this country. By encouraging Otto we are laying the basis for civil war in Central Europe as by bowing to Darlan we may have set the stage for a future civil war in France.

For the rest of this report I quote from a summary of the situation made available to the author by an important Washington source:

Despite his well-known reactionary Fascist leanings, Tibor Eckhardt was given aid and comfort by some of our government officials, and Milan Hodža has received similar encouraging treatment. Hodža conducts a campaign against the Czechoslovak Government, makes a most strenuous effort to undermine Beneš, and is endeavoring to split the Czechoslovaks. He asks for Slovakian self-existence or autonomy. Many Americans, unfamiliar with complex European problems, do not appreciate that not every movement pressing for autonomy is in line with Democratic conceptions. Since the last war Hungary and Germany have spent a great deal of money and have engaged in every skillful propaganda aiming at encouraging separatist movements in Slovakia, Croatia, and the Ukraine. Few people realize that linguistically and ethnically there is less difference between the Serbs and Croats, Czechs and Slovaks, Ukrainians and Russians, than between the Bavarians and Prussians. The difference between the Slovaks and Czechs developed because Slovakia lived for a thousand years under Hungary, while the Czechs for the last three hundred years had been attached to Austria. It will, of course, require generations before the Czechs and Slovaks, for example, will fully reunite.

The question with which we are confronted is: whether we

want to create as many homogeneous and united blocs as possible in Europe, or whether we intend to promote the further Balkanization of Europe. (Czechoslovakia has a population of only fifteen million. If the Slovaks, who number two and a quarter million, are given autonomy, can it be refused to the three and a half million Germans; to the million Hungarians; to the Ruthenians? It is well known that the Magyarized Slovaks, who didn't speak a word of Slovak, were the most outstanding exponents of autonomy. Without Slovakia, Bohemia and Moravia would be entirely surrounded by German elements—Germany and Austria. Czechoslovakia, which is one of the most important strategic points in Europe, would be crippled. It is not surprising that Hitler was anxious to eliminate Czechoslovakia. Whoever controls Czechoslovakia has secured a free road to southeastern Europe.)

There can be no doubt that if the Slovak, Croat, and Ukrainian autonomist demands are fulfilled Germany will emerge as the most powerful country in Europe even if we win the war. On the other hand, those who hope to split Germany or transform it into a confederation will suffer disillusionment. Since 1870, German consolidation and unity have reached such a high degree that such plans can only be realized by force, not by popular demand. We would only once more intensify nationalist sentiment and agitation in Germany.

The Polish politicians who have come to our shores have succeeded in turning the majority of the Polish population in the United States against the Sikorski regime. Some of these politicians entertain imperialistic dreams. The idea of combining the Ukraine with Poland is entertained. Even Colonel Beck, former Foreign Minister, is represented in the United States by a very active representative, Mr. Rathaus. Mr. Rathaus and other Poles not only cultivate prominent officials in our government agencies, but outstanding Republicans. They believe that the chances are very strong that the Republican party will come to power in the next election and they are making particular efforts to win over to their viewpoint such men as Raymond Buell, whose close affiliations with Willkie are known to them. It is interesting in this connection to mention the fact that after the fall of France, Colonel Beck,

using Artur Potocki as his intermediary, submitted via Ciano a proposal to the German Government offering to establish a government in Poland provided Lodz, Kalisch, and Plodzk would be reincorporated in Poland, but the German Government refused to make territorial concessions and Beck felt that without such concessions he would have no chance to win even part of the Polish people for his regime.

The conception which Hodža and others underline in their propaganda is that the peasant element should be the backbone of the future Europe. The peasant, who is described by them as utterly opposed to Bolshevism, will never give up his belief in personal property and for this reason would be the strongest possible backbone of a conservative Democratic Europe. The fact is that agrarian parties have partly followed reactionary policies and only partly adhered to Democratic orientation. Hodža, for example, supported and collaborated with the agrarian element in Sudeten Deutschland and fought the Socialists. While the agrarian element entirely joined up with Henlein, the Socialists were the only ones who until the last opposed the Henlein movement. All agrarian countries (Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, etc.) had reactionary regimes. The emphasis laid on the agrarian element as a broad basis for the various states surrounding Germany is fully in line with Hitler's conception of Germany functioning as the industrial center of an agrarian Europe. Hitler's policy in this direction also ought to be reversed. Only if certain industries now centered in Germany are transferred to other countries where conditions are favorable for them, will a sound Democratic system based on prosperity emerge, without Germany playing too preponderant a role. Thus permanent peace would be secured more definitely. An industrial Germany surrounded by agrarian countries means fulfillment of Hitler's dream of economic and political domination of Europe by Germany. Democracy in Europe will not be surely established if we satisfy ourselves by thinking purely in political terms, writing constitutions, etc., but only if it is firmly rooted in a reorganized economic structure.

The present policy as pursued in Washington consists partly in setting up or encouraging opposition movements against some

of the governments with which the United States is allied and strengthening monarchist and other reactionary tendencies. It is fully in line with this policy that the only country (except tiny Luxembourg) whose legation has not been raised to an embassy is Czechoslovakia, which was the only truly Democratic country in Central Europe, and was sacrificed at Munich. This slight is deeply embittering the Czechoslovaks, who are bewildered by the antagonistic attitude adopted toward them.

With regard to Italy, George Wadsworth, former Chargé d'Affaires of our embassy in Rome, pleaded at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate that the revolution in Italy can be brought about with the co-operation of the House of Savoy and the Vatican. According to those intimately familiar with the Italian situation, the Royal House has discredited itself because of its friendly attitude toward Fascism. In our broadcasts to Italy, the policy is followed to play down criticisms of the Royal House.

There can be little doubt that careful investigation would find that some of the activities described are inspired by German fifth columnists. The activities of these various politicians are further strengthened by pro-Finnish, pro-Vichy elements, creating a situation in Washington which arouses profound misgivings among all those who feel that a clear Democratic policy is an imperative demand of the moment if the war as well as the peace is to be won.

CHAPTER XXIV

Lest We Forget

THE ASSASSINATION of Darlan by a person of undisclosed identity solved one of the Democracies' major problems. It hauled down at least one flag in a camp where there have been and continue to be entirely too many.

But in recent months there has been a tendency to forget what Darlan represented. Who was Darlan? Was he truly a Fascist or a Fascistophile? And De Gaulle, what of him? About both these men many fictions have been invented and stated as facts. Let us not be mistaken. Darlan, for all his homespun aura of Common Frenchman, was an evil man. And De Gaulle, for all his arrogance, is a good man.

These are the pertinent facts of the lives of Darlan and De Gaulle as I obtained them in exhaustive researches in the Middle East, where I often saw the latter and where I had occasion to talk with ex-intimates of the former.

At Clermont-Ferrand, whither the French Government fled in the tragically golden spring of 1940 as France disintegrated like a flywheel gone wild, Admiral Jean Louis Xavier François Darlan met his young son, a captain in the Fusiliers Marins. Darlan the elder was himself a leatherneck and the Fusiliers' was his old regiment. Young Darlan had been wounded, captured by the Germans, and had escaped. He had been serving as a liaison officer with a British division

northeast of Paris, at that point in the Allied lines where the British and French armies joined. There the Germans hit hardest as they overran General Maxime Weygand's futile seventy-fives and swept down on Paris.

The story the shattered, embittered young officer told his father was an ugly one. The Fusiliers Marins, he said, had been butchered by the Germans. He said the British had withdrawn toward Dunkirk and deserted the French. He described how the Stukas strafed and dive-bombed the French unchallenged. "Never," the young man said, "was there an RAF plane in the air." France's own air force had been destroyed. At that moment France owned less than two hundred and fifty planes of all types and this the older Darlan knew as he knew, too, that the British had refused to base their fighter squadrons on French soil. They were conserving their air power for the defense of Britain.

Darlan was furious. He accepted his son's account of what had happened. The story confirmed his suspicions that the British intended fighting only to the last Frenchman. He had never really loved the British. He liked them less since the beginning of the war. He had gone often to London to draft battle plans with the British. He was accustomed to taking decisions personally, as an individual. In London he dealt not with one man but with a whole board of admirals and aides. He didn't like what he described to important American diplomats as their indecisive hemming and hawing. He recalled, as his son told his story of the British "desertion," that only a few days before, the British had advised him they couldn't hold Gibraltar if the Germans attacked in force, and they might be obliged to abandon the fortress. He had snarled at them for that.

And he snarled now. Angry, frustrated, and deeply affected by his son's tale, Admiral Darlan made a decision. He decided that the fall of France meant the inevitable collapse, within two or three weeks, of her ally, Great Britain. The war, he

reasoned, was over. In Rome, at almost the same moment, Benito Mussolini reached an identical conclusion.

Admiral Darlan's decision was made in a moment of white-hot rage. He was always a tempestuous man. At the naval academy they had called him "Titi Orchestre" for his arm-waving gestures of an orchestra conductor. An American diplomat who encountered the admiral while he raged about the "British defection" and screamed "All is lost" described him as "incandescent—he was as white-hot as an electric-light bulb."

From Clermont-Ferrand the French Government fled to Bordeaux. There another Frenchman, General Charles de Gaulle, also made a decision. His was born in the calm reasoning of a soldier who knew *why* France fell. Darlan blamed the British and the Communists and the Jews and all the popular blamees of those mad, hopeless days. De Gaulle blamed the French military minds who wouldn't believe his precepts of modern war, those same minds that had relied on the Maginot Line.

He, like Darlan, knew France was doomed. He had fought the Germans too. From May 17 through May 19 he had attacked the bridgehead at Abbeville, broken German resistance, and penetrated nearly ten miles through the enemy lines, capturing several hundred prisoners and much matériel. For this Premier Paul Reynaud had called him to Paris on June 6 and made him Undersecretary for War. But he, unlike Darlan, did not attribute his nation's defeat to British betrayal, for he knew this to be untrue.

De Gaulle was a skilled officer, a student of modern warfare, and an advocate of a mobile armored army and a large, hard-hitting air force. He had pleaded unheard for six years for the creation of such an army. He urged the abandonment of the expensive, static, unimaginative, and ultimately fatal defensive mentality which built the Maginot Line.

As Undersecretary for War, De Gaulle often visited Winston Churchill in London. He knew Churchill wouldn't quit, any more than a bulldog would let go of the seat of a tramp's pants. And while Darlan elected to remain in the shadows of a France first half swallowed and later totally eclipsed by the German darkness, to obtain from the conquerors the best possible bargain, De Gaulle fled to London. He smuggled his wife and teen-age daughter, Elizabeth, out on the last British troopship from Bordeaux. He boarded a pre-arranged British plane after making routine calls on his colleagues to squelch suspicions that he might be quitting France.

In England, De Gaulle organized a Free French committee, called for volunteers, and chose for his flag the double-barred cross of Lorraine, red on a white field, the flag of Joan of Arc. Frenchmen generally didn't like this. They preferred the tricolor. Nevertheless, De Gaulle came to be regarded as something of a male Joan of Arc.

In France, Darlan appeased the Nazis' demands for the persecution of Jews and the mass arrests of Communists. But, worse, he obeyed Berlin in demands for the arrest and prosecution of Premier Daladier, Léon Blum, General Maurice Gustave Gamelin, and others. This, Frenchmen never forgave him. Daladier, it was known, was one of Darlan's best friends. Daladier had often attested his affection for "The Little Admiral." Yet it was Darlan who signed the order for Daladier's arrest and for his trial in the travesty at Riom. For this and other acts of appeasement and collaboration with Berlin, Darlan acquired the reputation of a French Benedict Arnold.

"He has shot the albatross," they said of him, "and he has hung it about his neck." The language of other French and foreign critics was less poetic. In a telegram to a friendly foreign government a certain highly unpoetic diplomat described Darlan as "a Judas."

Darlan, until he jailed Daladier, was merely a politician who

had made a terrible mistake. He had misjudged Britain's power of resistance and ignored the possibility of America's entry into the war. This, Frenchmen might have forgiven Darlan. But his vengeance against Daladier and the other prisoners of Riom they couldn't forgive. In the streets Frenchmen shouted, "Traitor!" and jeered him as the man who had "opened the doors of France to the enemy."

In that and subsequent acts Darlan signed away his future as a great Frenchman. Frenchmen did not pause to reason that perhaps Darlan, with a Nazi Luger at his head, couldn't have disobeyed Berlin. Frenchmen didn't know, for obvious reasons, that Darlan had promised American Ambassador William C. Bullitt that the French Fleet would never be handed over to the Germans. Nor did they know that, later, Darlan pledged his word to American Ambassador to the Vichy Government Admiral William D. Leahy that the fleet would be scuttled rather than surrendered to the Germans.

His countrymen saw Darlan only as one of the two "Men of Vengeance"—the other was Pierre Laval—both of whom they hated. They saw only Darlan the politician, not Darlan the diplomat, who consciously or unconsciously was laying the ground for the American invasion of the western Mediterranean in November 1942. Darlan the politician gave an excellent performance as a collaborationist, a Naziphile. In Occupied France the few newspapers the Germans permitted the French to print carried news about Darlan in the fifth columns of their pages!

This almost universal distrust of Darlan reduced his value as an ally of the United Nations. In Washington responsible persons agree that his value, now that the fleet lies at the bottom of the harbor of Toulon or has joined United Nations' forces, would be almost negligible. They agree, also, that Darlan could not have led a Democratic upsurge in France to hasten her liberation and restoration as a great power for the explicit reason that Frenchmen aren't uniformly pro-Darlan

any more than they are universally pro-De Gaulle. And yet Darlan was not the Benedict Arnold he has been painted. He missed being a traitor by at least as wide a margin as De Gaulle falls short of being a Joan of Arc.

Until Darlan wrongly decided at Clermont-Ferrand that Germany had won the war, he had made few errors in a long and distinguished career as a sailor-politician. The French Army, at the war's outbreak in 1939, was considerably less than the "finest army in Europe." The French Navy, on the other hand, was substantially more than the finest fleet in the Mediterranean. It was one of the most up-to-date naval forces in the world and it was the creation of Jean Louis Xavier François Darlan, an energetic, shrewd little man standing a Napoleonic five feet four inches, with Charles Boyer eyes, a crescent of gray hair, high forehead, a large but not unhandsome nose, and a thin, determined mouth.

To those to whom all Frenchmen are foreigners and, therefore, inexplicable, Darlan seemed to be a "devious" man who spoke the truth only when he was obliged to do so. To the more cosmopolitan Americans and others who lived and worked in Paris and came into daily contact with the Little Admiral, he was a likable, vivacious, and correct person. A man like the rugged, impeccably honest Leahy, for instance, might find Darlan tricky. A cosmopolite like Bullitt, however, might have better appreciated Darlan. To Bullitt a man of Darlan's character would be as transparent as a crystal goblet.

Darlan was born of reasonably well-to-do bourgeois parents in the wine and cork town of Nérac, in the department of Lot-et-Garonne, seventy miles from Bordeaux. One of the few things Darlan had in common with De Gaulle was that he, too, was the son of a schoolmaster. Unlike De Gaulle's parent, however, Darlan's papa dabbled in politics—an interest which brought M. Darlan into the life of the rich and influential Georges Leygues, a neighbor. This was one of the most important circumstances in the life of the man who was destined

to be one of France's most-talked-of men although not, certainly, one of her best loved.

Six weeks after his birth, in August 1881, Jean Darlan was baptized in the small Roman Catholic Church of Nérac and the man who held the compact, squalling infant at the ceremony was M. Leygues. At the time M. Leygues was merely a man to watch. But while Jean outgrew measles and the mumps, M. Leygues became a Cabinet Minister. He survived several governments to become, in 1920, Premier of France and, in 1925, to be appointed Minister of Marine, an office he held for eight years. He was a devoted godfather and Jean Darlan a devoted godson. In French families, as in all Latin families, the relationship is a very intimate one, and M. Leygues did for his godchild more than a father might have done.

M. Leygues sponsored Jean's entry into the Navy. When war came in 1914 Jean, eager for rapid advancement and too young to command a warship, requested a commission in the Marines. With the Fusiliers Marins he served on the Western Front and, later, in the Balkans. He emerged from the war, in 1918, unscathed and with a commission to command a warship. From the moment Jean entered the Navy he asserted his ambition—to become commander in chief of the French Navy.

His young colleagues rather admired him for his spunk and because he seemed to know where he was going. He chose his friends carefully. He preferred to buddy-up with the son of an admiral who might be influential rather than with a youngster who couldn't ever be useful. He maintained the good will of his fellows by wining and dining them and he acquired a reputation as a gourmand. At Bordeaux on the night the decision was made to ask Germany for an armistice Darlan gorged himself in the Chapon Fin, a noted restaurant. Several officers who saw him resigned the next day in disgust.

Not an intellectual and not particularly well read, Darlan was a mediocre student. His marks at the Lycée St.-Louis in

Paris were on the poor side at first. From the beginning of his second year onward, however, he was an honor student. Gossips immediately circulated an explanation. They said Darlan's sister had married Capitaine de Vaisseau Keraudran, then aide-de-camp to the President of France, who had "influence" in the school.

In 1929, at the age of forty-eight, Jean Darlan was appointed vice-admiral by Minister of Marine Leygues. Darlan thus became the youngest officer of that rank in half a century of French naval history. Whatever doubts colleagues, friends, and enemies might have had regarding the rumors that Darlan was being "pushed" were thereby confirmed.

He acquired rapidly an unpleasant political aura. He became renowned as a sailor who had seldom seen the sea.

He also developed an appetite for decorations. In 1933 he became a man of wealth. M. Leygues left him the bulk of a fortune amassed from the profits from a department-store chain M. Leygues had inherited. In 1934, in keeping with his new stature, he received the order of commander in the Legion of Honor. In 1937 he became chief of staff of the French Navy.

Unaccustomed to wealth, Darlan had never owned an automobile. When he moved to Paris with his round, pleasant, but otherwise undistinguished wife, he decided to celebrate his appointment as chief of staff by buying a car. At an elegant showroom on the Champs Elysées he examined the showiest, costliest machine in the place and told the clerk he wanted it. The clerk, eying him dubiously, suggested he might have to make a deposit. Darlan was in civvies. With his bowler hat, high collar, and ordinary gray suit he might have been any small officeholder of France's underpaid army of civil servants. He couldn't abide the suspicion he read into the clerk's request for a deposit that he, Darlan, was just another Frenchman. He broached a roll of thousand-franc notes and paid for the automobile in cash.

In the same period Darlan added another ribbon to the number he wore over the left breast pocket of his uniform. Only the chief of staff can award Legion of Honor medals in the French Navy. Darlan gave himself the Grand Cross of the Legion. Military medals are won only in action, but, in that same warless year, 1937, Darlan conferred upon himself a medal for valor in action. About three years later he was to receive, at Berchtesgaden, at the hands of Adolf Hitler himself, the Kriegsverdienskreuz, a Nazi bauble awarded "for extraordinary war services rendered outside the field of military action."

As he rose in importance and power Darlan appears not to have made many friends among the French naval hierarchy. This was partly due to jealousy toward a fellow officer who seemed to have a genius for getting ahead and who was known to have powerful friends. It was also due to Darlan's ruthlessness and his capacity for intrigue. Once he quarreled with a senior officer, Admiral Mouget, commander in chief of the Mediterranean Fleet. After the argument Mouget shot himself in his bath. Darlan reportedly remarked callously: "He was a poor fool."

The French aristocracy treated him diffidently. They looked down their thin-nostriled noses at him as a *petit bourgeois*. He gave them reason for their diffidence by affecting a wing collar which isn't part of the French Naval uniform but is a piece of haberdashery which hallmarks the struggling civil servant as the ten-gallon hat once stamped the grass-roots Congressman. More particularly the clique whose fathers and grandfathers had run the ships of the French Navy for centuries regarded Darlan with the suspicion all good sailors reserve for landlubbers, especially political landlubbers. They called Darlan and his wing collar "the tax collector" behind his back.

And yet Darlan had a considerable following among the

proletarian body of the Navy and in the officer group. As the creator of the modern French Navy he had raised their pay and given them better ships, improved ships' food, and provided better equipment than they had ever known. He acquired thus what Frenchmen called "*la bande de Darlan*," his gang. In a choice between a De Gaulle who was a soldier and a stranger and a Darlan who was a sailor like themselves and a person they knew, they chose Darlan.

When, at Bordeaux, the French cabinet was divided on the question of whether to continue fighting or quit, Darlan cast his vote as Undersecretary of the Navy in favor of an armistice with the Germans. He thus aided the conspiracy which sought immediate cessation of hostilities. He helped accomplish, wittingly or innocently, what the notorious German agent Otto Abetz and his French stooges desired.

Says Maurice Dejean, former secretary of the French Embassy in Berlin and chief of cabinet of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs who saw him in the Parc de Bordeaux the next morning: "I was struck by his pleased expression, which he made no attempt to hide. One might have thought that France had just won a great victory." That was June 18.

Within four days Darlan agreed to place the French battle fleet under Italo-German "protection." All Frenchmen knew this. It was a published stipulation of the Armistice signed at Compiègne Forest in Marshal Foch's old Pullman car. By February 25 Admiral Darlan had become Vice-Premier and he embarked upon what to every Frenchman, regardless of political affiliation, looked like a diabolical plot to sell France to the Germans piecemeal. Already he had declared in a broadcast: "We must not allow ourselves to become involved in a sentimental consideration which would only harm us by widening the gap created between two neighboring nations. In the cause of European peace, we must bridge this gap." To most Frenchmen this indicated that he had already advised the Germans of his willingness to sign a separate peace. This is

why one day in the streets of Beauvais, Frenchmen shouted: "Who sold us out . . . ?"

And then . . . Oran. On this sad day Britons turned their guns on moored French ships and insured that these at least would not be used against Britain in the desperate battle of the Atlantic. Darlan never forgot Oran. Some months after Oran, in a private conversation, someone asked if he remembered Dunkirk.

"Ah, yes," Darlan said. "I remember Dunkirk. That was glorious. I also remember Oran. That was shameful." His interrogator had no doubt, then, how Darlan felt about the British. And if doubt remained that hatred for the British—a hatred which was crystallized at Clermont-Ferrand—now dominated Darlan's life it was dispelled by the admiral's public assertion of his confidence in Germany's good intentions toward France. Britain had necessarily extended her blockade to the French coasts to prevent war materials and food from reaching Germany via conquered France. Darlan criticized the British embargo and assured the French people they would find the Germans "more generous and understanding of the needs of humanity than the English."

Gradually the Nazis, apparently finding Darlan receptive, increased their demands. Axis partner Japan exacted occupation of Indo-China. For this Frenchmen nicknamed Darlan "L'Admiral Corbette" for his surrender of the colony which had been conquered for France by Admiral Courbet. The new nickname meant the "kow-towing Admiral" in addition to being a play on the name of Courbet.

Resentment against Darlan grew as he made new concessions to the Nazis. The German Armistice Commission gained control of 1,500,000 tons of French merchant shipping, obtained the use of approximately 80 per cent of France's available railroad rolling stock and locomotives.

Darlan, meanwhile, instituted a strict press censorship, decreed himself the right to censor even statements issued by

the office of Chief of State Marshal Pétain. He replaced all actual and potential opponents in the Judiciary Police, the Service General d'Information, and the Public Security Force with members of his gang.

Thus secure at home he allowed General Dentz, in Syria, to permit Nazi planes to use French airports against the British. Darlan also obtained Marshal Pétain's approval of a German scheme to attack the British from behind in Iraq in the spring of 1941. This plan miscarried, but Darlan's orders to Dentz to resist in Syria cost several thousand French and British lives.

Appeasement at home went so far as to emulate Nazi anti-Semitism. Here Hitler used Darlan as he had used Mussolini. It was Darlan who drafted and enforced France's anti-Semitic legislation. And while the Jews were being persecuted, Darlan instituted a house-to-house search for Communists and ordered mass arrests.

Despite all this, however, diplomats who were intimately associated with Darlan in Paris during and after the Armistice period insist that Darlan was not a Naziphile. They say categorically that he resisted the Nazi penetration of France to the limit of his powers. In this they rate Darlan a cut or two above Pierre Laval who, all agree, is a native French Fascist. The worse that the well-informed will admit about Darlan is that he is a "very ambitious man" and "congenitally anti-British."

If Darlan's major sin was that in May 1940 he made the mistake of thinking Britain was finished and the war ended, an equally great one was that he never rectified it. He had plenty of opportunities to do so. He could have sailed out of Toulon with the entire French Fleet whenever he so desired. Ambassador Bullitt and subsequently other American diplomats offered him and his fleet safe harbor in Guantánamo, our naval base in Cuba. Once he told Bullitt he'd been thinking about sending the fleet away to safety but had changed his mind.

"I had better keep the fleet here, under my hand," he said.

“It is all that is left of France, the only thing left with which to bargain with the enemy.”

He did keep his promise to Bullitt and Leahy. The French Fleet was scuttled. The ships which survived, I was informed, won’t see service with the Nazis for a long, long time to come. The Germans will find fire-control and other apparatus effectively sabotaged. The Germans, furthermore, haven’t sufficient quantities of ammunition for the French guns, nor do they have the crews trained to man French ships. And a score or more of small warships and submarines which escaped the debacle at Toulon have joined United Nations’ naval units.

None of this, however, made a hero of Darlan in the eyes of Washington. Although in the capital there are some soldiers and sailors who frankly admit their first interest is to win the war and “to hell with the moral niceties,” there are others who believe that Darlan’s presence in North Africa as a pal of Uncle Sam had serious implications. Maybe Darlan wasn’t a Naziphile. But if he wasn’t he certainly gave a good imitation of a man who had sold out to Berlin. Therefore, the more farsighted argue, the deal which gave Darlan power and safety in North Africa compromised the position of the United States as the leader of a Democratic regeneration of the world. The deal with Darlan, they maintain, undermined the faith of all Nazi-conquered people who looked principally to the United States for leadership and inspiration.

To Washington the obvious alternative to Darlan, General De Gaulle, is not completely acceptable. De Gaulle’s limited appeal to fellow Frenchmen became painfully obvious with his failure to take Dakar, even at gun point. He had previously failed to deliver to the United Nations the allegiance of huge, strategically important French West Africa and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, French Somaliland, Indo-China, and the important islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe in the Caribbean.

Had it not been for the inspiring and able leadership of

French generals like Gentilhomme, Koenig, and Catroux the Free French movement might have died of spiritual under-nourishment. For though De Gaulle's ideals are as lofty as he is tall, he is a difficult man to understand and more difficult to love. Those who know him admit he is arrogant, self-willed, and cold. He is, in a sense, eminently un-French.

Mention the name of De Gaulle in Washington and people become embarrassed. They stare down at their feet, clear their throats and look away, or they tell you very bluntly that De Gaulle, although a fine soldier, is an inept politician. One who knows De Gaulle intimately described him as "politically illiterate."

Diplomats and others in Washington who deal with the problem take refuge, finally, behind the phrase: "America isn't fighting to set up anybody in power, but only to liberate the Nazi-conquered countries so that they may choose their own leaders eventually." This is the *kayo* punch designed to stall off any further questions concerning what has become a major political crisis in World War II.

Just as those who argue so violently that Darlan was a Benedict Arnold do so largely on instinct and without real knowledge of the man and his works, so do they argue, poorly equipped with facts, about De Gaulle.

The anti-Darlanites did not know, for example, that Darlan had promised and ordered the scuttling of the French Fleet long before we invaded the western Mediterranean. Similarly the anti-De Gaullists who condemn him for not having forced the French Colonies to join the Free French do not know that in the agreement De Gaulle signed with Winston Churchill in London in July 1940 it is stipulated that the Free French volunteers cannot be used to fight Frenchmen.

Darlan's sin in the minds of most Frenchmen was his apparent willingness to play Faust to Hitler's Mephistopheles. De Gaulle's major fault, dispassionate Frenchmen seem to agree, is his inclination to play Joan of Arc.

Whatever his faults, most Frenchmen and others agree that De Gaulle is a symbol, a rallying point. His virtues, they feel, far outweigh his faults. His hands, as they say in French, are clean. One of his major virtues in the eyes of the badgered diplomats in our State Department is his declared willingness to serve under someone else if that someone is found. Preferably he should be a civilian, but lacking a civilian, a soldier of the type of General Giraud will do. Giraud would have been the boss Frenchman in North Africa from the beginning if he had been able to deliver more than Darlan. Giraud controlled only 25 per cent of the French and native troops in the colonies involved. Darlan delivered the remaining 75 per cent.

De Gaulle's giant stature—he's six feet six inches tall—and his very name appeal to some Frenchmen. His name means "of Gaul." The able press agency of the De Gaulle movement cites his height and noble features as the personification of civic virtue. He has a huge, slightly beaked nose, a level, penetrating gaze, dark eyes, and dark, slicked-down hair which he combs high and straight down on the side somewhat in the manner of the Nineties.

He is addicted to white chamois gloves. These he wears almost constantly, even at home. He seldom smiles, and is amiable, apparently, only in the intimacy of his family. His wife's Christian name is lost in the vast anonymity with which Frenchmen cover their private lives, but she was a Mademoiselle Vandreux, the daughter of a moderately wealthy biscuit manufacturer. She does her own housework in their country home near London, never attends public functions.

Their daughter, Elizabeth, was graduated recently from the convent school of Our Lady of Sion in London and now attends the Oxford Higher School. Their son, Philippe, is in his early twenties and is a cadet in the Free French Navy in training at Portsmouth. They are handsome, vivacious children who seem to have inherited neither the shyness nor the cold-

ness of their father nor the retiring instincts of their mother.

The De Gaulles live comfortably in a country home near London and Madame De Gaulle tends the flower garden herself, cooks, washes the dishes, and repairs their clothing. She is an expert needleworker. She dislikes being photographed and prefers that all interviews or statements about themselves be given out by Monsieur le Général.

Long before De Gaulle wrote his book, *The Army of the Future*, in 1934, he was established as a soldier and scholar in the art of war. He was graduated from France's West Point, St. Cyr, with honors in 1910. Assigned to the 33rd Infantry under then Colonel Pétain, he fought in World War I and was wounded three times. Captured, he tried five times to escape and was severely punished by the Germans.

After the war he became a captain in the Chasseurs, where he obtained his first knowledge of mechanized warfare and where he formulated his theories of lightning war. These theories he later set down in his book and unwittingly provided, with Giulio Douhet's work on air power, the blueprint for the Nazi war machine which blasted Poland and France in a few days.

Although he got the brush-off from old-line officers like Pétain and Maxime Weygand, under whom De Gaulle served against the Bolsheviks in Poland in 1921, there was room for him and his theories at the Staff College and at the War College where, for a few years, he tried to teach officers from lieutenants up to generals how to fight with modern weapons.

At Sedan in the bitter summer of 1940 De Gaulle saw that his lessons hadn't been learned.

At Bordeaux, later, De Gaulle was one of the minority who insisted that France continue to fight. He believed that the French Army, although beaten on the Continent, could resume the struggle from precisely where the fighting is taking place now—Tunisia. But he reckoned without the politicians. He was the soldier. Darlan was the politician.

Epilogue

I HAVE NO CONCLUSIONS. Make your own. If Von Clausewitz was right in saying that a war is shaped by the stresses extant at the moment of its outbreak, then it is permissible to establish the premise that strains prevailing at the moment the peace is signed determine its character and endurance.

If that premise is acceptable you ought, from the foregoing, to make some interesting deductions. The stresses and strains operating against a truly Democratic peace are many, varied, and powerful.

We seem at the moment to be as utterly unprepared for peace as we were for war. I have tried to report accurately what are some of the pressures militating against a sane peace. These pressures constitute obstacles. Unless they are removed we shall again win a war—and lose a peace.

Bronxville, February 1943



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